



Enjoy your visit to the Big Bend Area!

It is our honor to have you here.

Please find local area information & resources.

— Terlingua Nights Cabins —

Welcome to the Big Bend



Area Information Book



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**Hours are subject to change.
Call First.**

Auto Repair and Services

- Beechie's Auto Service – **432-371-2392** or **432-294-2080**
- Cycletek LLC – **432-371-2569**
- Terlingua Auto Service – **432-371-2223**
- Wild Country RV Mobile RV Repair – **432-371-3317**

Convenience Stores

- Cottonwood – **432-371-3315**
- Big Bend Resort Convenience Store – **432-371-2483**
- General Store – In Lajitas – **432-424-5040**

Outdoor Recreation

- Angell Expeditions – **432-229-3713** or **305-336-2787**
- Big Bend Overland Tours (Part of Big Bend Resort & Adventures) – **432-294-1113**
- Big Bend Stables (Study Butte) – **432-371-3064** or **800-887-4331**
- Big Bend River Tours – **800-545-4240**
- Desert Sports – **432-371-2727** or **888-989-6900**
- Far Flung Outdoor Center – **800-839-7238**
- Lajitas Golf Resort & Spa – **432-424-5000** or **877-525-4827**
- Lajitas Equestrian Center – **432-424-5190**
- Lajitas Stables -- **888-508-7667** or **432-371-2212**
- Rio Aviation – **432-557-9477**

Personal Services

- Agave Massage – **432-424-5146**

Vet

- Rio Vet Services – **432-371-3325** or **405-795-3905**

Places to Eat

**Hours are subject to change.
Call First.**

In Terlingua – Study Butte

Bad Rabbit Café Home style food at its best. Located at 1600 Terlingua Ranch Rd. 7:00 AM – 8:00 PM Monday – Thursday, 7:00 AM to 9:00 PM Friday – Saturday, 7:00 AM to 7:00 PM on Sunday
432-371-2244

Big Bend Resort Cafe Junction TX118 & FM170. 6:00 AM - 10:00 PM, 7 days per week, closes earlier mid-summer. -- **432 371-2218**

Chili Pepper Cafe Owners have been dishing out border favorites for many years. Specializing in Tex-Mex and Northern Chihuahuan fare. Located just north of Terlingua TX Post Office on TX 118. Open 8:00 AM – 8:30 PM. **432-371-2233**

La Kiva FM170 a unique structure of massive sandstone boulders, cut into a terrace overlooking Terlingua Creek. Menu features barbecue, steaks and other grilled specialties. 5:00 PM – 10 PM. Full bar until 12:00 AM **432-371-2250**

Long Draw Pizza FM 170 S Side 3.9 Is located on Highway 170, one and a half miles West of the Terlingua Ghost Town serving the best Pizza in Southwest Texas. For an ice cold beer and your favorite pizza, the Long Draw has their special world famous sauce recipe known. Add that to an outstanding variety of special and popular toppings and you have the best pizza you've ever eaten. **432-371-2608** Closed Monday & Tuesday

Rio Bravo Mexican Restaurant Located FM170 just west of junction TX118.
432-371-2101

Tivo's Restaurant TX118, (10 miles N. of Study Butte) Adjoins the Longhorn Motel. Authentic TexMex and American style menu. -- **432 371-2133**

In the Terlingua Ghost Town

Espresso Y Poco Mas Café Breakfast and lunch at its best. Open 7:30 AM to 2:00 PM
432-371-3044

High Sierra Bar and Grill at El Dorado Hotel, featuring Tex-Mex favorites, grilled specialties and hand-cut steaks. Open 11:00 AM - 11:00 PM daily. Bar open noon till midnight, Saturday till 1:00 AM. Beer, Wine. Dine on the upper deck for amazing views of the Chisos Mountains. **800-371-3588** or **432 371-3282**

The Starlight Theatre, This unique restaurant/watering hole is installed in the adobe remains of the local movie theater constructed about 1930. Serves a great mix of Texas and Mexican cuisine. Full Bar, open 5:00 PM - 12:00 AM, and 1:00 AM on Saturday. Dinner served from 5:30 PM - 9:30 PM. Deluxe brunch Sundays 10:00 AM until 2:00 PM.
432 371-2326

In Big Bend National Park

The Chisos Mountain Lodge Open at 7:00- 10 AM for breakfast, 11:00 AM – 4:00 PM for lunch. 5:00 – 8:00 PM for Dinner. -- **432-477-2291**

In Lajitas

Candelilla Café Southwestern cuisine, open 7 AM – 9 PM for breakfast, lunch & dinner. Extensive menu boasts regional specialties, **432-424-5030**

Thirsty Goat Saloon Monday – Thursday 12 PM – 10 PM, Friday & Saturday 11 AM – 11 PM, Sunday 11 AM – 10 PM. Often features live music in an upscale western bar. A limited food menu available. **432-424-5033**

Licha's Bakery 7:30 AM to 11 AM. Great option for breakfast on the run.
432-424-5000

General Store Deli 8 AM to 6 PM daily. Stop by the deli where we make box lunches to go, wine and cheese baskets or anything you will need for your day of exploration in the Big Bend Region. **432-424-5040**



AIR TOURS

Rio Aviation Inc – Retired National Park Ranger and pilot Marcos Paredes has founded Rio Aviation to show folks a bird's eye view of Big Bend. From the air, you view the unobstructed geology of this amazing region, and can imagine the powerful process that made and continue to shape our planet. Rio Aviation is licensed to conduct tours over both the Big Bend National Park and Big Bend Ranch State Park. Though many take the pilot's recommended routes for maximum scenery, guests also customize flights to see their favorite Big Bend landmarks from the air. **432-557-9477**

Barton Warnock Visitor Center

432-424-3327

GPS: 29°.26'90'02"N 103°.75'73'51"W

The best place to start any trip to Big Bend Country.

Entrance Fees

- Adult (Peak): \$5 Daily
- Adult (Non-peak): \$3 Daily
- Child 12 Years and Under: Free

Hours

Open daily from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.



The Barton Warnock Center is located on FM 170, one mile east of Lajitas.

Barton Warnock Visitor Center is on the eastern edge of Big Bend Ranch State Park and Fort Leaton State Historic Site is on the western edge.

Things to Do

Barton Warnock Visitor Center serves as the eastern visitor center for Big Bend Ranch State Park and is located near Lajitas. Permits for backpacking and camping (no hookups) at Big Bend Ranch State Park can be obtained at Barton Warnock or at Fort Leaton State Historic Site, the western visitor center for the park. Call 512-389-8919 to make camping reservations. Visitors can also purchase river-use permits, licenses, and information about the Big Bend region.

The new, renovated Interpretive Center, "Una Tierra - One Land," is the fruit of an international partnership effort of state and national park experts in Texas and the Mexican states of Coahuila and Chihuahua. The vast majority of information, including captions and text, is presented in both English and Spanish.

The Center presents an archeological, historical, and natural history profile of the Big Bend region. It houses a book store and gift shop. The book store includes guides for area interest, as well as books on the history and the natural environment of the Big Bend Region. The gift shop has a variety of T-shirts, post cards, and souvenirs.

Policies on Dogs at Big Bend Ranch State Park

The following rules apply to all Texas Parks & Wildlife Department sites.

- Dogs must always be on a leash no longer than 6 feet.
- Dogs are not allowed in any buildings (that includes the Saucedo Ranch House and Bunkhouse).
- You must pick up your dog's feces with a bag immediately and place in a trash can.
- Never leave your dog unattended.
- Do not allow your dog to approach wildlife.
- More information is available in the Texas State Parks Rules and Regulations.

The following rules apply to Big Bend Ranch State Park.

- Dogs are only allowed to be ¼ mile from campsites or designated roads, and only on the Closed Canyon Trail and the Hoodoos Trail on FM 170.
- Dogs are not allowed on any other hiking trails, in the backcountry, or more than ¼ mile from campsites or designated roads.

Note: Under the Americans with Disabilities Act, these policies do not apply to persons relying on service dogs.

Why the Rules?

Dogs have an effect on the wildlife of our park.

- The presence of dogs at Big Bend Ranch State Park puts stress on wildlife, whether from direct (physical contact) or indirect (contact with feces, etc.) interaction.
- The presence of dogs can make wildlife feel threatened, increasing the chances of a wild animal attacking a dog or human.
- Dogs can pass and receive diseases and parasites to and from wildlife through direct and indirect interactions. Diseases and parasites include fleas, ticks, worms, parvovirus, and many more.

Dogs have an effect on other visitors.

- While you may love your dog, not everybody does. The park is for the enjoyment of all visitors. The presence of dogs can inhibit some people's enjoyment.
- Dogs scare birds, interfering with bird-watching (many birders come to this park).
- Dog feces in the park can result in an unpleasant smell around campsites, along the roadside, and from the bottom of shoes.

One last thing to consider:

Many state parks in Texas do allow dogs in the backcountry and on hiking trails. However, Big Bend Ranch State Park has stricter dog policies than other parks.

First, Big Bend Ranch State Park is a vast and wild area unlike any other state park. We strive to maintain the beauty, solitude, and natural feeling of the wilderness. Our dog policy helps us to continue to offer a park experience unlike any other.

The second reason for our policies is your dog's comfort and safety. Big Bend Ranch State Park is a remote park located in a desert climate. With summer temperatures averaging over 100° F, dry air, and rough, rocky terrain, park conditions can be very difficult on dogs. Many dogs live in air-conditioned houses or a different climate than that of the Chihuahuan Desert. Thus, the heat can be hard on them. Many dogs are used to walking on sidewalks, manicured lawns, and in maintained city parks. Walking on our trails can be painful and wearing on a dog's foot pads.

You love your dog, but the best way to love your dog is to leave him at home when you come to Big Bend Ranch State Park.

Ranger Programs

Take a self-guided tour through the Interpretive Center and two-acre desert garden. Discover how the history, geology and landscape have shaped the cultural heritage of the region; how humans, animals and plants have adapted to survive the harsh conditions of the Chihuahuan Desert; how plants have adapted to the harsh conditions of the Chihuahuan Desert and how the first inhabitants of Big Bend used these plants for food, shelter and medicine. Guided tours for groups may be arranged.

Texas State Park Rules & Regulations

Texas State Parks has adopted rules and regulations to protect park areas for future generations as well as for the convenience and safety of current visitors. Please note this is a partial listing of state park rules and regulations. Visit the [detailed Park Rules & Regulations](#) page for a complete list. Know these before you go!

To ensure your visit is a pleasant one, please observe the following:

- **Litter**
Please recycle appropriate litter and deposit trash in dumpsters. Leaving no trace of your visit helps the park remain beautiful and reduces the possibility of human/animal conflicts.
- **Wastewater**
Wastewater (both black and gray) can only be discharged at designated dump stations. Wastewater carries bacteria that can spread serious illnesses and food particles that can attract undesirable animals, including fire ants.
- **Parking**
Park only in designated areas to protect the plants and soil.
- **Safe Driving**
Protect all park users and wildlife by obeying speed limits. No passengers under 18 are permitted in truck beds.
- **Quiet Hours**
Quiet hours are 10 p.m. to 6 a.m. Respect your neighbors and celebrate nature's night noises.
- **Keep Wildlife Wild**
Do not feed or harass wildlife.
- **Alcohol**
Public display or consumption of alcohol is prohibited. All outdoor areas within the park are public.
- **Snakes**
Don't beware of snakes, be aware! They are signs of a healthy environment. If you cross paths with a snake, back away slowly.
- **Pets**
Protect pets and wildlife by keeping pets on leashes, no longer than 6 feet, at all times. Please note: Pets are not permitted in any buildings at Texas State Parks. If you plan to take your pet hiking, see note under Trail Safety.
- **Gathering of Firewood**
Downed dead wood offers food and shelter to wildlife and provides essential nutrients for the soil. Please do not gather firewood.
- **Tent Camping**
Please camp only on designated camp pads or sites to protect fragile plants and minimize soil compaction.
- **Collecting**
Take only memories and photographs. Federal and state laws prohibit collecting plants, animals

and artifacts. Preserve the past for the future by leaving artifacts in place and reporting locations to park staff.

- **Campfires**

Campfires are permitted only in designated rings to avoid ground scarring and wildfires.

- **Geocaching**

We need to know about your caches. Please check with park headquarters before placing geocaches within a park.

- **Swimming**

Swim in designated areas only; no lifeguards are on duty. We highly recommend that children and weak swimmers wear personal flotation devices. Pets and glass containers are not allowed in swimming areas. Pets can create unsanitary conditions and may feel threatened by strangers. Broken glass can cause serious injury. Read these tips on [swimming safety](#).



Swimming Safety --Follow these tips every time you go on the water:

- First and foremost, learn to swim before heading out to any swimming area. If you are not a strong swimmer, or you are getting tired, wear a life jacket. Children are strongly encouraged to always wear life jackets while swimming in lakes and rivers.
- Be aware of your surroundings. Lakes, rivers and streams are natural environments. Watch for sudden drop offs, changing bottoms and potential for unseen limbs, rocks, and other objects.
- Stay hydrated. Summer heat can contribute to dehydration, even when you are swimming. Take frequent breaks, wear sunscreen, drink plenty of water and avoid alcohol.
- Never swim alone. Even the most experienced swimmers can tire or get muscle cramps, so having a buddy can be helpful.
- Supervise children at all times. Drowning is the second leading cause of accidental death among children, so keep your eyes on your kids. It only takes a moment for a child to slip below the surface.
- Assess your skills and don't take chances. Know your swimming skills and don't rely on flotation devices. If you don't know how to swim, do not get in the water, even with a raft or other flotation device.
- Swim in designated swimming areas. Park staff members have made careful decisions about the safest and best places for swimming. Please swim only in designated swimming areas.

Consider Currents

- Water can look calm on the surface, but be aware of currents under the surface. Whether you're swimming in a lake, river or ocean, underwater currents exist and can put you in danger. If you find yourself in a current, do not swim against it. Instead, swim with it until conditions are calm enough for you to swim to safety.

On the River

- Be aware of changing river conditions. Swift currents from flash flooding can happen in an instant. If you notice the water rising, turning muddy or changing, leave the area immediately.

Wind, tide and currents all contribute to water's conditions. If you have questions or concerns about swimming conditions, ask park staff.

Trail Safety -- Take care of yourself!

- Know your limits. Prepare for sun and heat. Wear sunscreen, hats, insect repellent and appropriate clothing and hiking shoes. Bring a first aid kit.
- Heatstroke and hypothermia can kill. Wear layers of clothing so you can adjust to temperature changes.
- Drink plenty of water. Your body loses fluid quickly when you're on the trail. Bring a quart of water per hour of activity. Eat a salty snack with each drink to maintain energy and avoid illness.
- **Weather changes quickly.** Check forecasts and prepare for unexpected changes in the weather.
- Tell others where you'll be. If possible, avoid exploring alone. Tell someone where you are going and when you plan to return.
- **You may not be able to connect.** It's a good idea to take along a cell phone and GPS unit, but don't count on them. In this environment, both may lose reception. Both depend on limited battery power.
- **Check for trail closures.** Certain trails may be closed during prescribed burns or for other resource management work. Check with park headquarters for current trail conditions and trail closures.
- **Trails can be rough.** Unpaved trails may have wet sections, loose rocks, thorny plants, tree roots and/or low-hanging limbs, and can be tough going for a stroller or wheelchair. Park staff can advise about the suitability of trails for your group.
- **Be careful with pets.** Carry water for your pets, as not all trails have water. Be aware of your pet's limitations. Not all trails are suitable for pets, and pets are not allowed on some trails.
- **Wear a helmet.** When mountain-biking, check with park headquarters to match the trail to your skill level. Wear a helmet to protect yourself in case of a crash.

Birding

Big Bend National Park is the most bio-diverse park in the entire system. Within its boundaries, one finds more species of butterflies, bats, reptiles, plants, ants and birds. Over 450 avian species either live in Big Bend National Park, or migrate through at some point in the year. The variety of habitat with desert, mountain and river makes for ideal conditions for a truly remarkable diversity.

Big Bend marks the western limits of the ranges of many eastern species and the eastern most extent of many western species. In addition, the Rio Grande is an important feature on migratory flyways.



Birding Big Bend is Mark Flippo, who has 17 years' experience working as a naturalist interpret in the Big Bend National Park and is a 30-year veteran of the Park Service. Each outing is custom designed to fit the experience level and interest of the guest. Call **432-371-2348**

Birding Hot Spots

Several locations in and around Big Bend National Park offer excellent bird watching in a variety of habitats.

Rio Grande Village, Big Bend National Park - Always one of the best locations in the area. Any time of year delivers interesting and exciting birding for all skill levels. Zone-tailed Hawk, Common Black Hawk, Vermillion Flycatcher, and Greater Roadrunners often treat birders to great moments of viewing pleasure.



Chisos Basin - A Chihuahuan Desert sky island, with elevations reaching almost 8000', the Chisos Basin offers a complete change of temperature, habitat, and population. Spring, summer, and fall offer Phainopepla, Pyrrhuloxia, Scott's Oriole, Colima Warbler, Magnificent Hummingbird, Blue-throated Hummingbird, Black-chinned Sparrow, and many others. Lots of elevation change, so be prepared for slow and easy.

Sam Nail Ranch - A nicely shaded low desert oasis off the **Ross Maxwell Scenic Drive**. An old windmill that is allowed to continue to pump water keeps pecan trees, Mexican persimmon, fig, and a wide variety of native plants alive at this abandoned old ranch site. These in turn provide shelter for a great variety of birds. Varied bunting, painted bunting, Bell's Vireo, Crissal thrasher, and lots of exciting surprises await visitors to this quiet spot. Just relax on the bench, watch the pool of water and wait for the birds to appear.

Lajitas Resort - A privately owned resort on the banks of the Rio Grande, Lajitas is a good place to spot a variety of birds that are attracted to the riparian zone and the Rio Grande. Common Yellowthroat, Marsh Wren, Swamp Sparrow, Mexican Mallard, Verdin, and Black-tailed Gnatcatcher are just a few of the treats to be found beside the river.

La Kiva - Site of an RV park, this shaded little retreat on the banks of Terlingua Creek always provides a relaxing birding experience. Either feeder watching around some of the visiting RVers or walking along Terlingua Creek, you can get good easy looks at Pyrrhuloxia, Black Phoebe, Lesser Goldfinch, Verdin, Inca Dove, and many others at almost any time of year.

Pena Colorado Park - This hidden little spring fed pond, surrounded by Cottonwood trees is another bird magnet in the dry desert. Just a few miles south of Marathon this peaceful little county park provides birders with lots of Vermilion Flycatchers, Golden-fronted Woodpeckers, Lesser Goldfinches, Black Phoebes, Cactus Wrens and lots of other activity.

Bicycles

Big Bend offers many opportunities for bicycle travel and sport. Scenic paved highways with low traffic are ideal for skinny tire road bikes with lots of gears. The extensive back road system in **Big Bend National Park** offers great mountain bike access. **Lajitas Resort** and the adjacent **Big Bend Ranch State Park** offer over 100 miles of designated single track mountain bike trail.



Desert Sports offers guided mountain bike trips, bike rentals, repair and a variety of accessories and last minute necessities for bicycle activities. Located on FM170, 5 miles west of the junction of TX 170 and TX 118 next to Terlingua Ghostown. **888-989-6900 local 432-371-2727**

Christmas Mountain Hike

The Christmas Mountains is a rugged 9,269 acres tract of land 12-mile northeast of Terlingua in Brewster County which is now owned by the Texas State University System.

The Christmas Mountains are open to the public. You will need a permit to hike or drive up the trail. A permit can be obtained at the Terlingua Ranch Lodge Office at 16000 Terlingua Ranch Road. The office is open 7 days a week – 9 AM to 5 PM. To drive up the trail will require a \$75 deposit, fully refundable upon return of the key to the lock. Only one vehicle will have access to this road at a time.



The following is what you will receive at the Terlingua Ranch Lodge.

CHRISTMAS MOUNTAINS ACCESS PERMIT APPLICATION

I, the undersigned designated Trip Leader, hereby apply for a day use permit to hike, horseback ride, mountain bicycle ride (circle one) the Christmas Mountains Access permitted below, to be used (date) _____ 20_____.

PERMIT APPLICATION PART I – Read thoroughly:

Rules & Regulations for Permitted Christmas Mountains Access:

1. All motorized vehicles are prohibited on the Christmas Mountains property.
2. Hiking, horseback riding and bicycle riding only are allowed in the Christmas Mountains.
3. Permitted activities are allowed ONLY in Sections 91, 90 and 95, utilizing the Old Mine Road.
4. This permit does not authorize camping of any sort or duration.
5. No hunting of any kind is allowed under this permit.
6. No fires of any kind are allowed under this permit.
7. Pets are not allowed in the Christmas Mountains.
8. Hikers may leave the road and hike cross country only within Section 91, 90 & 95 (see map).
9. Bicycles are allowed on the Old Mine Road, but are not allowed to leave the roadway. Riding to the peak is not allowed. Bicycles must be left at the end of the road.
10. Horseback riding is allowed on the Old Mine Road. Riders may leave the road and ride cross country only within Section 91, 90 & 95. (See Map). Riding to the peak is not allowed. Picket your horses at the end of the road and hike the final stretch to the peak.
11. Persons hiking or horseback riding cross country out of sight of the roadway, other than to access the peak area, must notify the permit issuer when the permit is issued.
12. Possession of firearms by anyone other than concealed handgun license holders or law enforcement personnel is prohibited.
13. Collecting of any natural or historic feature is prohibited. This includes rocks, plants, plant parts including seeds, animals or animal parts, or any man-made object.
14. Pack out all trash, including food scraps and toilet paper. Do not dispose of food scraps such as apple cores or orange peels – pack them out. All paper, wrappers, or any other item you brought with you must be packed out.
15. Do not feed wildlife. Feeding wildlife may result in having to destroy the animal, and human food is usually detrimental to wild animals.
16. Do not contaminate any water source. Wildlife in the Christmas Mountains survives with extremely limited water sources; every water source is precious to their survival. Soaps or cream on your hands will contaminate water sources. Leave water sources for the wildlife. **DO NOT DRINK, NOR ALLOW HORSES TO DRINK, FROM THESE WATER SOURCES.**
17. Do not smoke while traveling. Smoke only at rest stops. **PACK OUT BUTTS & FILTERS.**
18. Parking is authorized only in designated parking areas. (See map). Vehicle permit must be displayed on the vehicle dashboard at all times.
19. All activities on the Christmas Mountain must be consistent with the Texas General Land Office Surface Lease No. SL 20080027 and the Gift Deed between the Conservation Funds and the State of Texas, copies of which are available for review.
20. Unaccompanied minors may not enter the Christmas Mountains property.

PERMIT APPLICATION PART II – Trip Leader Complete and Sign:

Name (Please Print): _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Telephone: _____

Date of permitted visit: _____

Method of Travel: (Check One) Foot: _____ Mountain Bike: _____ Horseback: _____

Number of people in group: _____ Ages: _____

Names of Minor Children: _____

Number of horses: _____

Vehicle description: Make: _____ Model: _____

License number: _____ State: _____

Place the dashboard tag you will be given on the driver's side dash in plain sight, so that it is easily visible from outside the vehicle. Lock your vehicle. Take your keys.

I (the undersigned) state that I have read and understood all of the above rules and I acknowledge receipt of the map referred to in this permit application. I agree to abide by all rules and accept the responsibility of "Trip Leader" for the group described above. I will return the permit to the issuing office immediately following completion of the hike.

The undersigned, individually or as guardian of a named minor, acknowledges and agrees that use of the Christmas Mountains is subject to Chapter 75, Limitation of Landowners' Liability of the Texas Civil Practice and Remedies Code, which limits the liability of the Property Owners Association of Terlingua Ranch, Inc. ("POATRI") as a lessee of real property giving permission to another to enter the Christmas Mountains for recreation. [Attached are signed specific releases for each member of the group.]

Signed _____ Date: _____

Issuing POATRI representative: _____

We hope you enjoy your Christmas Mountains experience and that you will join the POATRI in promoting the responsible enjoyment and active stewardship of the outdoors.

Permit Fee \$ _____ Paid Date: _____ Received by: _____

**PERMIT APPLICATION PART III – Must be read and signed by each member of the group:
SPECIFIC RELEASE OF LIABILITY REGARDING USE OF THE CHRISTMAS
MOUNTAINS PROPERTY UNDER LEASE BY POATRI**

The undersigned, individually or as guardian of the named minor, understand and acknowledge that use of the premises commonly known as the Christmas Mountains involves risks such as, but not limited to, the following which might result from the use of equipment or facilities on the Christmas Mountains, from the activity itself, from the acts of others, and/or from the unavailability of emergency medical care and which include the risk of property damage, bodily injury and possible death.

The undersigned, individually or as guardian of the named minor, assumes all risk that arise out of the use of the equipment or facilities on the Christmas Mountains, from the activity itself, from the acts of others, and/or from the unavailability of emergency medical care and includes the risk of property damage, bodily injury and possible death.

The undersigned, individually or as guardian of the named minor, acknowledges and agrees that use of the Christmas Mountains is subject to Chapter 75. Limitation of Landowners' Liability of the Texas Civil Practice and Remedies Code, which limits the liability of the Property Owners Association of Terlingua Ranch, Inc. ("POATRI") as a lessee of real property giving permission to another to enter the Christmas Mountains for recreation. Accordingly, POATRI does not:

- assure that the premises are safe for recreational use;
- owe to you a greater degree of care than is owed to a trespasser on the premises;
- or assume responsibility or incur liability for any injury to an individual or property caused by any act by you.

"Recreation" means an activity such as camping, picnicking, hiking, nature study, including bird-watching, bicycling and mountain biking, rock climbing and any other activity associated with enjoying nature or the outdoors. This is not an exhaustive list of recreational activities.

The undersigned, **RELEASES, DISCHARGES, AND HOLDS HARMLESS** POATRI, the State of Texas, the General Land Office of the State of Texas, the officers, employees, agents or other representatives of each and **AGREES AND COVENANTS NOT TO SUE** them on account of or in conjunction with any claims, causes of action, injuries, damage, cost of expenses arising out of the activity, including those based on death, bodily injury or property damage whether or not caused by the acts, omissions or other fault of the parties being released.

RELEASE & ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF PERMITEE – Attach to Permit Registration

I have read and understand the agreement involves the legal rights of the minor and me. I agree to be bound by all the terms of this agreement.

Signature of Permittee
Print Name: _____
Date: _____

CONSENT AND RELEASE ON BEHALF OF MINOR _____(Print Name):

I am the parent and/or legal guardian of the above named minor. I have read and understood the agreement involves the legal rights of the minor and me. I agree to be bound by all the terms of this agreement. I also give my consent to the participation in the activity of the minor.

Signature of Parent/Legal Guardian
Print Name: _____
Date: _____

EMERGENCY CONTACT (PRINT):

Name: _____
Address: _____

Email: _____
Telephone(s): _____

Safety Tips – YOU are responsible for your safety.

- Carry at least 1 gallon of water per person. This includes small children who may dehydrate more easily than adults. **DRINK THE WATER.**
- Wear appropriate footwear, clothing and hats. “Street shoes” are not appropriate for hiking. Shorts and tank tops expose you to increased dehydration and heating. Wide-brimmed hats are recommended; UVB values in the area routinely exceed safety levels. All seasons of the year are susceptible to sudden thunderstorms; rain jackets are recommended during the warmer portion of the year, and warm winter clothing should be available during your hike in all potentially cold seasons, regardless of the temperature at the beginning of your hike. The peak area is often exceptionally windy and far colder than expected. Drops in temperature can be sudden and unexpected.
- Be alert for poisonous snakes and insects. Place your hands and feet carefully; be prepared to cope with bites and stings.
- Rattlesnakes do not attack unless provoked. **DO NOT** attempt to move a rattlesnake. Back away and wait. The snake will move off the trail when it senses no danger.
- Mountain lions, bears, bobcats, coyotes, foxes, javelina deer and other mammal are a natural part of the environment. If a large mammal approaches you, make noise, yell, blow whistles, and wave your arms over your head, throw rocks or sticks.
- Do not shoot any wild animal or reptiles. Report any negative encounters to the office where you got your permit.
- During rain or lightning storms, do not seek shelter in washes or gullies, as flash flooding may occur without warning. During lightning storms, seek shelter away from peaks or exposed areas.
- Wildfire can be a danger; plan your escape route.
- There is no guarantee of cell phone service in the Christmas Mountains.
- Lock your vehicle. Take your keys.

Directions to the Christmas Mountain Parking Area

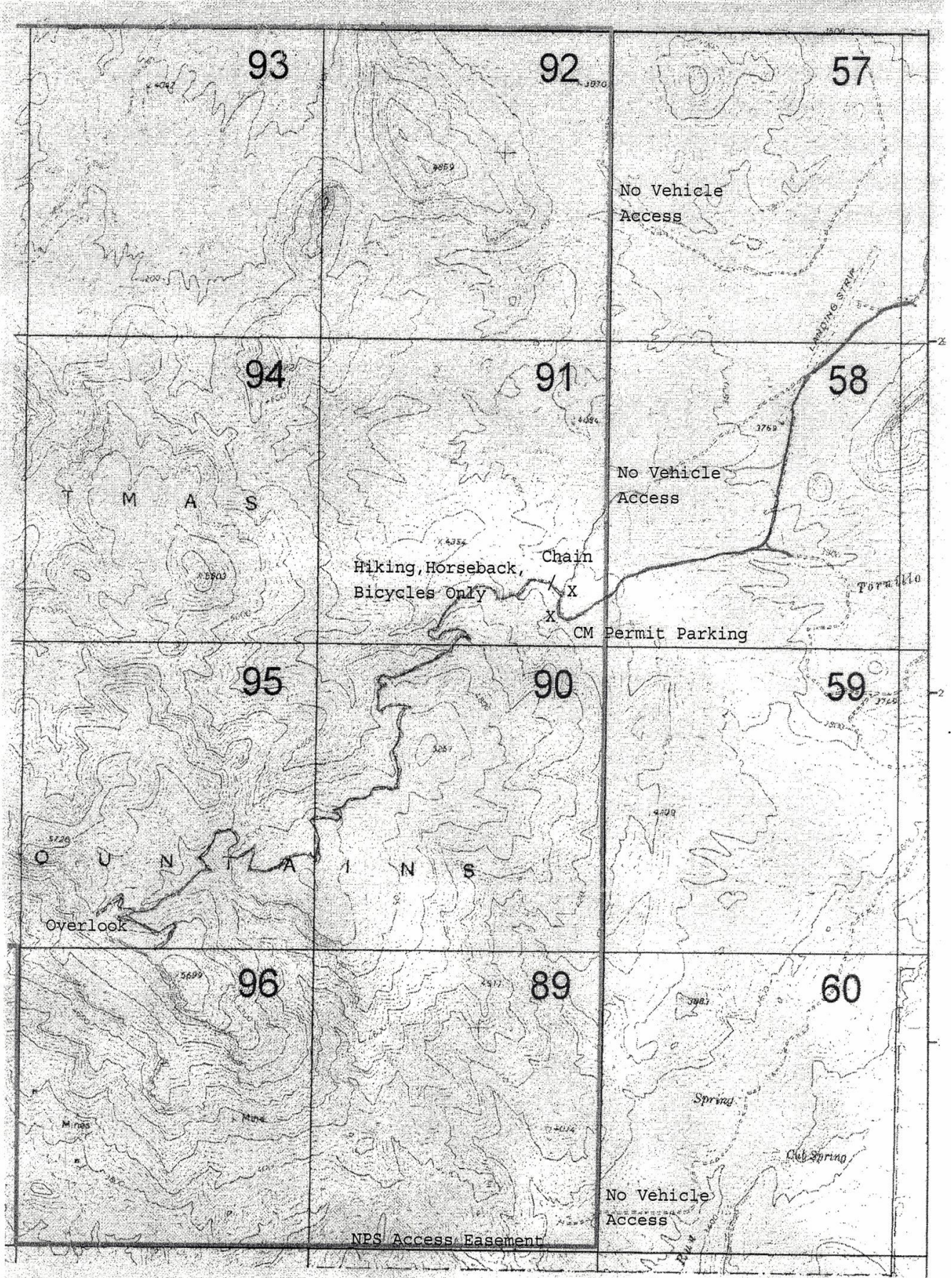
From the POATRI office (Terlingua Ranch Lodge), go right – past the large stone building (Bad Rabbit Café) which will be on your left.

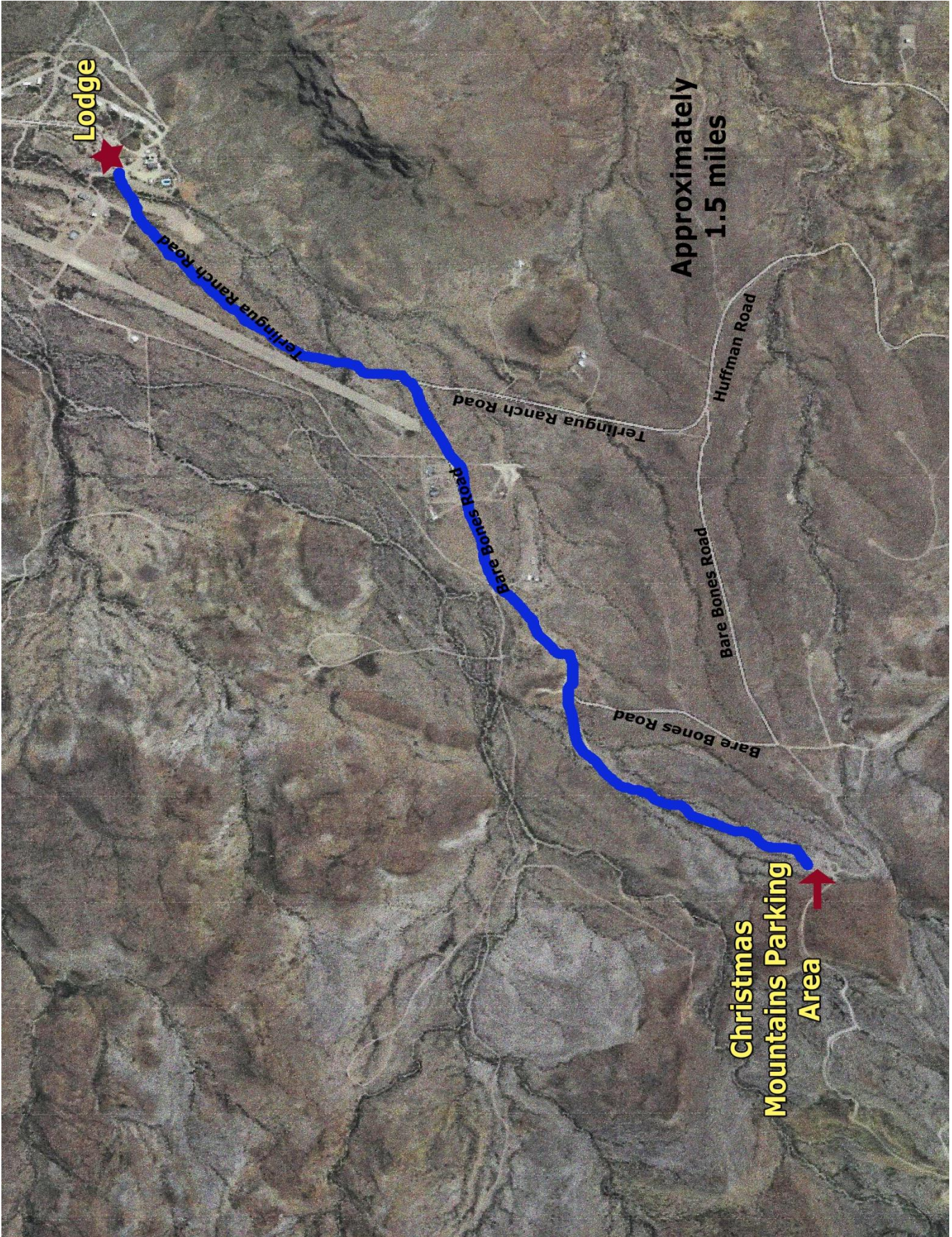
Continue straight, past the camping area on your left, through the drainage.

Following the drainage, take the first turn to the left – this is marked “Main Road”.

Follow this straight up the top of the hill – you’ll be able to see the road going up the hill.

At the top of the hill, turn right and follow the road to the parking area, where the road is closed by a chain.





Lodge

Approximately
1.5 miles

Terlingua Ranch Road

Terlingua Ranch Road

Bare Bones Road

Huffman Road

Bare Bones Road

Bare Bones Road

Christmas
Mountains Parking
Area

**CHRISTMAS
MOUNTAINS
HIKING PERMIT**

ISSUED TO:

FOR DATE:

IN PARTY:

CULTURE

Desert environments have inspired great philosophers, poets, artists and dreamers of every description. The Chihuahuan Desert, that the Big Bend region is a part of, is no exception. Once described as a dusty bohemia, the greater Terlingua area enjoys an abundance of resident musicians, painters, sculptors, photographers, lapidarists, ceramicists, and talented actors.

Marathon

Marathon offers a few nice shops and art galleries with a pleasantly unpretentious and laid back approach that offer fine arts and photography, handcrafts, books and unique regional clothing.



- Chisos Gallery – Specializes in Southwestern art, religious articles, Mexican antiques and Tarahumara pottery, with an extensive and diverse selection. On U.S. Hwy. 90, next to the Post Office. 424-386-4200
- Evans Gallery – James Evans is a keen observer of the Big Bend, which is reflected in his fine B&W photography. The gallery also displays original works by other southwestern artists. Across the tracks, Ave. D and South 1st St. 432-386-4366

Terlingua/Study Butte

Terlingua/Study Butte have a unique setting and atmosphere that lends itself to great art projects as well as attracts residents with artistic inclination. There are several locations to see local art and handwork.

Bonnie Wunderlick is a local painter whose work is displayed at the High Sierra Bar and Grill in Terlingua and the Catchlight Gallery in Alpine. Bonnie's Big Bend work includes landscapes, figures, architecture and abstract paintings which reflect the artist's 20 plus years of painting the Big Bend and her influences in contemporary painting.

- Quilts, Etc. is located in the Bee Mountain Center on highway 118 just north of the junction of TX 170, features homemade quilts in a variety of styles and fabrics.
- Many Stones – Fine jewelry hand crafted by the proprietor, stained glass, precious and semi- precious stones, mineral specimens and eclectic surprises. Open most of the time. Highway 118, just south of the junction of 170 and 118. 432-371-2994
- Brer' Rabbit Curios – Is in the Chisos Mining Company office. It is a classic souvenir shop, neat stuff for not much money. They feature a selection of rocks and fossils, along with kitschy memorabilia. No Santa Fe styled art, or pricey cowboy chic. Located in Chisos Mining Company Motel. Highway 170, Study Butte. 432-371-2430
- Terlingua Trading Company & Book Store – The Trading Company boasts an extraordinary inventory of southwestern U. S. and Mexican influenced gifts and collectibles, including an outstanding book and map section. Open 10:00am – 9:00pm almost always. 432-371-2234
- Earth and Fire Imports carries an assortment of fine ceramics and metalwork from Mexico, as well as displays work by local artists. A resident artist program allows visitors to meet local artists at the shop and learn how the beautiful landscape inspires and informs their work.

GOLF

There are two golf courses located just outside Big Bend National Park, offering completely different golfing experiences:

Black Jack's Crossing at Lajitas Resort is an 18-hole championship course along the Rio Grande that offers lush fairways, tight greens, and plenty of bunkers and water hazards to make it interesting. This is one of the best golf courses in West Texas, call **1-877 LAJITAS** or local **424 5000** for information on green fees, tee times and reservations.



Big Bend Golf Club located at the Junction of FM 170 and TX 118, just two miles from Big Bend National Park is a true desert course where accuracy is rewarded. The 9-hole course has different tee boxes for the back nine, making for 18 holes of challenging play. **432 371-2218**



Hiking

Big Bend offers a variety of hiking opportunities, everything from short interpretive walks, to rugged, multi day excursions. Big Bend National Park alone features a system of over 150 miles of improved hiking trails. Hikers are allowed to travel off trail if they want to; there are two short but very scenic ADA accessible paved trails. Day hikes require no permit in Big Bend National Park.

Although many trails in the area are well marked and easily followed, hiring a guide can provide a more complete Big Bend experience. Not only do guides know the way to all the best places, they are also first aid trained and knowledgeable about the local geology, history, flora and fauna. Try one of the following services:

[Big Bend River Tours](#), FM 170 near the junction of FM 170 and TX 118.
800-545-4240, local 371-3033

[Big Bend Expeditions](#) offers guided 4x4 tours of the rugged country near their property, taking guests to remote sites of archeological and geological interest. **888-408-2945**

Hiker's Guide to Trails of Big Bend National Park

Introduction

This booklet has been planned to provide all Park Visitors with the information necessary to enjoy Big Bend on foot to the fullest extent of their abilities and desires. Don't let the title scare you. The "hikes" listed herein vary in length from 50 yards to 33 miles. However, most are less than five miles long and can be taken as relatively easy day hikes. Hopefully, the information contained here will encourage you to get out of your car and to experience Big Bend in all of its primitive, rugged beauty. There are few places left in the United States today where you can completely escape from man-made intrusions. Big Bend is such a place. Take advantage of its unspoiled nature. Listen to the quiet. Take a few deep gulps of pure, unpolluted air. Let a little of the Big Bend Mystique invade your consciousness. Be thankful that places like Big Bend still exist.

Published and copyright 1978 by Big Bend Natural History Association in cooperation with the NATIONAL PARK SERVICE to conserve the scenery and the natural and historic objects and the wildlife therein and to provide for the enjoyment of the same in such manner and by such means as will leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations.

Hiking Hints

Know Your Route. If your hike takes you away from the maintained trails, you should carry a topographic map and a reliable compass, and KNOW HOW TO USE THEM. Inquire first about the condition of your route and of possible water sources.

Inform Someone of Your Whereabouts. If you are only going out for the day, let someone know where you are going and when you expect to return. Permits for overnight trips can be obtained at any ranger station. Park Headquarters at Panther Junction is the best place to get complete information about how to safely use the park backcountry and to obtain a permit.

Be Prepared!

Plan to carry enough food and water to last until your return, plus a little extra. Appetites and thirsts grow surprisingly during a day of hiking. One gallon of water per person per day is recommended in summer, and slightly less in winter. Hiking boots, preferably with lug soles, provide important protection against rocks and sharp desert plants, as well as ankle support and increased traction for safety. A pair of tweezers for pulling thorns should be included in your first aid kit. Rattlesnakes are rare in winter and common in summer, especially at night. For your own safety, wear tough clothing. Carry a flashlight after dark.

Special Conditions

1. Permits are required for overnight hikes.
2. Campfire use is highly restricted. Check with a Ranger for current regulations.
3. Litter: if you pack it in, YOU pack it out!
4. No smoking on trails when hiking. If you do smoke, remember that cigarette butts are litter. **PACK THEM OUT!**
5. Motorized vehicles are permitted on designated roads only.
6. Pets are not permitted on the trails or anywhere in the backcountry.
7. Leave all natural and historic features undisturbed, including wildlife, plants, rocks, artifacts, etc.
8. Camp at least 200 feet from any road trail, historic structure, spring or other water source, and well out of and away from dry washes.
9. Do not use soap in springs or streams. Do not disturb springs.
10. Stay on the trails. Do not take shortcuts across switchbacks.
11. The use of firearms and metal detectors is prohibited.
12. Horseback riders check at Headquarters for special regulations

For Your Safety:

1. Do not rely on springs. Carry adequate water.
2. Rock throughout the Park is very unstable. Do not climb rock faces.
3. Watch out for poisonous reptiles, but remember, they are protected too.
4. Do not camp or park your car in arroyos or dry creek beds. Flash floods appear quickly after rainstorms.

Short Hikes

All walks in this section have short leaflets or interpretive signs to introduce you to special features along the trail. Although most are short and easy, don't forget to take along a canteen of water in summer.

No. 1 Panther Path

Easy walking. Fifty-yard loop trail. Self-guiding booklet available at the trailhead.

This short trail winds through a desert garden in front of the Visitor Center at Panther Junction. Fifteen minutes spent on this level trail will acquaint you with many cacti and other common plants that inhabit the Chihuahuan Desert.

No. 2 Rio Grande Village Nature Trail

Easy walking. 0.4-mile loop trail. Interpretive signs along trail.

Beginning in the southeastern corner of the Rio Grande Village Camp-ground, this trail passes through dense, jungle-like vegetation of the river floodplain, and then climbs abruptly into the arid desert environment. A high promontory provides panoramic views along the Rio Grande and south into Mexico. Downriver is the Mexican village of Boquillas, Coahuila State, Mexico, and Boquillas Canyon. Upriver are sand dunes on the Mexican side, and the distant Chisos Mountains beyond Hot Springs Canyon. Just across the river is the little farming village of Ojo Caliente (Spanish for "hot spring"). The fields are irrigated by water from warm springs that surface along the limestone bluff on the east side of the clearing.

No. 3 Santa Elena Canyon Trail

Easy walking. 1.7 miles round trip. Interpretive signs along trail.

The trail begins at the end of the Santa Elena Canyon Road, and is one of the prettiest short walks in the park. Wear old shoes in case the Terlingua Creek crossing is muddy. If the water here is deep and swift, do not cross. Just enjoy the canyon from a distance, and try again in drier weather. Once across the creek, the trail climbs a flight of concrete steps and then slopes gradually down to the river's edge inside the canyon. It continues farther into the canyon, winding among large boulders, and ends abruptly where the canyon wall meets the river. This is one of the narrowest places in the seven-mile long Santa Elena Canyon. Rest awhile and listen for the descending notes of the canyon wren or the call of the raven high along the canyon walls.

No. 6 Chihuahuan Desert Nature Trail

Easy walking. 0.5 miles round trip. Interpretive signs along trail.

Located 5.9 miles east of Panther Junction at Dugout Wells, this easy trail winds through typical shrub desert habitat and serves as an excellent introduction to the vast Chihuahuan Desert.

No. 7 Hot Springs Historic Walk

Easy walking. 2 miles round trip. Self-guiding pamphlet available at trailhead.

Located at the end of a two-mile improved dirt road, this interesting walk is a must for history buffs and nature lovers alike. Allow yourself to drift back in time and envision what life was like in this early homestead and health resort.

No. 8 Lost Mine Trail

Medium difficulty. 4.8 miles round trip. Self-guiding booklet available at trailhead.

Beginning at Panther Pass on the Basin Road, this trail serves as an excellent introduction to the plants and animals of the high Chisos Mountains. It starts at 5600' elevation and leads upward along the northern slope of Casa Grande to a promontory high on the ridge separating Pine and Juniper Canyons.

From the end of the trail, at 6850' elevation, you can see upper Pine Canyon to the east, and Juniper Canyon far below to the southwest; the East Rim forms a high backdrop behind Juniper Canyon.

If you have limited time, hike only to the Juniper Canyon Overlook (Stop 12 in the self-guiding booklet), one mile from the trailhead, for one of the finest views in the Park.

Developed Trails

The trails listed in this section are all well-defined and easy to follow. They serve as excellent introductory hikes for newcomers to Big Bend. If the trail starts on a primitive road, be sure to check road conditions before starting.

No. 9 Window View Trail

Easy walking. 0.3 miles

The trail begins at the Chisos Basin Trailhead and circles the low hill to the west. Benches have been placed at a number of places along the trail. A stroll on this trail is excellent in the evening. The setting sun through the Window is uniquely Big Bend.

No. 10 Tuff Canyon

Easy walking. 3/4-mile round trip.

Tuff Canyon is located west of the Castolon Road, 5 miles south of the Mule Ears Overlook spur road. The trail begins on your left as you face Tuff Canyon from the parking area and leads you to the bottom of Tuff Canyon. Water has carved your route between walls of soft tuff, which originated as a layer of volcanic ash. Farther into the canyon, harder lava flows appear, which have resisted the rapid erosion that the tuff experienced. The best way out of the canyon is to retrace your steps.

No. 13 Boquillas Canyon Trail

Easy walking. 1.4 miles round trip.

Starting from a parking area at the end of the Boquillas Canyon spur road, the trail climbs over a low hill and drops down to the river near a group of Indian bedrock mortar holes. Just past this point is a huge sand slide formed by down-canyon winds that pile loose sand against the canyon wall on the Texas side, below a shallow cave.

No. 14 Chisos Basin Loop Trail

Easy walking. 1.6 miles round trip.

This route starts at the Basin Trailhead and follows the Laguna Meadow trail for 5 miles before branching off to the left. It reaches a promontory overlooking the upper Chisos Basin, then heads back toward the Basin via the Boot Springs (Pinnacles) Trail. From the overlook, the major features of the Basin skyline are easily visible. The high peak to the south with the "thumb" to the right of it is Emory Peak, the Park's highest at 7,835 feet. Clockwise around the Basin from Emory Peak are Ward Mountain, Amon Carter Peak and the Window, Vernon Bailey Peak and Pulliam Ridge, Casa Grande, and Toll Mountain.

No. 16 Grapevine Hills Trail

Easy walking. 2.2 miles round trip.

Enough cannot be said about the sheer beauty of this area. Nature's handiwork is indeed magnificent along this easy desert trail. Beginning one mile before the end of the Grapevine Hills improved dirt road, this trail leads into the heart of Grapevine Hills, following a sandy wash through massive granite boulders to a low pass at the south end of the drainage. A picturesque "window" of boulders (see photo) can be found by following a series of metal stakes for 100 yards to the right of the pass.

Geologically, Grapevine Hills is a laccolith, a mushroom-shaped underground lava flow that domed the rocks above, and was later exposed by erosion. The resulting rock shapes are a delight to the imagination. This is a good morning or evening hike that can be very hot at mid-day in the summer.

No. 18 The Window Trail

Medium difficulty. 5.2 miles round trip.

The trail starts at the Basin Trailhead, but can also be picked up from the Basin Campground, in which case the distance is 4 miles round trip. The trail passes through an area of open chaparral vegetation before dropping into Oak Creek Canyon and following it to where it narrows down to only 20 feet at the base of the Window. This is where the drainage from the Basin pours out into lower Oak Creek. Thousands of years of erosion have carved and polished this gorge. The Window Trail offers a wide variety of plants and is an excellent hike to see a good number of birds. The afternoon view of Casa' Grande, framed through the oaks and maples that occur along the lower half of the trail, offers excellent photographic possibilities as well.

High Chisos Complex

No. 19 High Chisos Complex

This section includes all of the Chisos Mountain trails between the Basin Trailhead and the South Rim, and Juniper and Blue Creek Canyons as well. These high country trails are some of the Park's most attractive hikes. During summer, the Chisos highlands provide a cool retreat from the warmer lowlands. Please bear in mind, however, that the Chisos trails cover a relatively small area, in which human impact is rapidly becoming an overbearing factor. Before you go, review again the Special Conditions at the beginning of this book. Camp only where you will leave no trace and never in meadows or within 200 feet of the trail, springs, or historic structures.

Carry plenty of water. Water is sometimes, though not always, available at Boot Spring, below the cabin. Check with a ranger when you get your permit. As at any exposed water source, treatment is recommended. Use only as much water as you absolutely need. Rains are few and far between in this country.

Experienced hikers **DO NOT TAKE SHORTCUTS**. Switchbacks prevent trail erosion and make hiking easier. Don't defeat their purpose by cutting across them. Remember to take a camp stove. Use of campfires is highly restricted in the Park, and open fires are not permitted at all in the Chisos Mountains. More detailed maps and information on all of these trails can be obtained at Park Headquarters or in the Basin.

No. 19A South Rim

Strenuous Day Hike, 13 - 14.5 miles round trip, depending on route.

The South Rim may be seen on a loop hike, starting and ending at the Basin Trailhead. Hike up via the Boot Spring Trail (Pinnacles Trail) and down via Laguna Meadow, or vice versa. See the following trail descriptions for features and side trails along the way. Any of these make good day hikes if you do not wish to make the entire trip to the South Rim. However, once you reach Boot Canyon or Laguna Meadow, you have gained much of the necessary elevation, and it is relatively easy to hike the rest of the way to the South Rim.

The shortest route to the South Rim is 6.5 miles from the Basin Trailhead via Laguna Meadow. You may return by the same trail, or you may circle the East Rim and hike out through Boot Canyon and the Boot Spring trail. The full round-trip hike is 14.5 miles. You may wish to exclude the East Rim section and to return via the Boot Canyon "short-cut" trail to Boot Spring and to the Chisos Basin, a round-trip of 13 miles.

The South Rim is located at the southwestern edge of the high Chisos Mountains. From there, 2,500 feet above the desert floor, Santa Elena Canyon can be seen 20 miles to the west, and Emory Peak dominates the northern skyline. On a clear day, you can see peaks south in Mexico that are more than 80 airline miles away. To the east is a long series of mountains known as the Sierra del Carmen. A portion of the northern group of mountains in this range is within the Park, and is known as the Dead Horse, or Sierra del Caballo Muerto. The Sierra del Carmen begins at

Boquillas Canyon. El Pico, a prominent feature of these layered limestone mountains, is 30 airline miles from the South Rim. The Sierra Fronteriza is the southernmost group of mountains within the Sierra del Carmen. The Fronteriza are volcanic mountains with features that are similar to the Chisos, but the Fronteriza are more than 9,000 feet in elevation and about 50 miles away. Just below the South Rim is a wilderness that can be traversed by hiking the Outer Mountain Loop primitive route, Hike No. 34.

Boulder Meadow

1.5 miles from the Basin Trailhead Easy half-day hike.

This meadow is a pretty, boulder-strewn flat at the base of Toll Mountain and can be reached by an easy half-day round-trip hike through pinyon-juniper-oak woodlands.

Beyond Boulder Meadow, the trail climbs steeply in a series of switchbacks (Remember stay on the trail!) through spires of rhyolite to 7,100 feet elevation at Pinnacles Pass and the head of north Boot Canyon, about three miles from the Basin Trailhead. The pass offers an excellent view of the Basin, and on a clear day, you can see Cathedral Mountain, just south of Alpine.

Emory Peak

4.5 miles from the Basin Trailhead Moderately difficult half-day hike.

The one-mile trail to Emory Peak breaks to the right just over Pinnacles Pass, 3.5 miles from the Basin Trailhead. This spur trail leads to the highest point in Big Bend National Park: the summit of Emory Peak, elevation 7,835 feet. The last few feet require a scramble up a rock wall, but the view is superb in all directions. Boot Canyon lies along the south side of the peak, and Laguna Meadow is situated at the base of the talus slope to the west. The antenna and other instruments at the summit are part of Big Bend's two-way radio system. The equipment is powered by solar cells.

Primitive Routes

(Check with Park Rangers)

There are vast wilderness areas in Big Bend National Park where few hikers enter; yet many areas contain an abundance of old roads and trails, which were in use from the late 1800's until the Park was established in the 1940's. Some of these routes are still quite visible, at least in a few places. Others are marked by occasional rock cairns, or metal stakes, or not at all. For ANY of these hikes, a 7.5-minute topo map, a compass, knowledge of the desert, up-to-date information, proper gear, and horse sense are necessary commodities.

The notation of water availability is advisory only. No hike should be attempted without adequate water for your first evening on the trail and back to your vehicle or starting point, should your destination be dry. Additional Exploring Big Bend National Park contains countless canyons, arroyos, expanses of open desert and other vast trackless areas that can be explored at length by the experienced backpacker who has traveled the more developed routes already. If the trails listed in this book have merely whetted your appetite for more, consult with personnel on duty at Park Headquarters for additional ideas for backcountry exploring.

These trails were selected from the Hiker's Guide to trails of Big Bend National Park, available from the Big Bend Natural History Association and locations within the park. Many more hiking options can be found within this immense desert landscape, but these provide an excellent way to get acquainted with The Big Bend. These excerpts are used courtesy of the BBNHA and NPS. bbnha@nps.gov.

HORSEBACK RIDING

There is no better way to see Big Bend than from the back of a horse. Horse rides as short as one hour in length are available right outside Big Bend National Park in Study Butte. For the more adventurous trips from 3 hours to multi-day camping trips are available in Big Bend Ranch State Park.



Local Outfitters offer rides from two hours to several days in length. There is no better way to see **Big Bend** than from the back of a horse.

Big Bend Stables, On TX 118, just south of the junction of TX 170 and TX 118. **1-800-887-4331** or local **371-3064**

Lajitas Stables, TX 170, 3 miles west of Lajitas in Big Bend Ranch State Park **1-800-887-4331** or local **371-3064**

Equestrian Center at Lajitas Resort and Spa, TX 170 approximately 17 miles west of junction TX 170 and TX 118, **432-424-5190**

Some operators may stable horses overnight for those who bring their own. Big Bend National Park has limited facilities for private horses inside the park, check out **Horse Rules** for the latest info.

Horseback Riding Rules

Visitors are welcome to bring and use horses in the park. A **backcountry use permit** is required and must be obtained in person at a park service visitor center up to 24 hours in advance of the trip. Every horse user should obtain a copy of the **stock use regulations**. All livestock must meet state vaccination requirements. Copies of vaccination documents must be in your possession.

There are no horses or pack animals for hire in or near the park; you must bring your own stock. All rides require thorough preparation. Improper equipment, poor conditioning, and disregard for weather



conditions can result in an unpleasant or dangerous ride. Respect for the environment you ride through will help protect park resources for you and for future generations.

Where Can You Ride?

While horses are not permitted on paved roads or road shoulders, all gravel roads are open to horses. Cross-country travel is permitted in the park, except in the Chisos Mountains where horse use is limited to the Laguna Meadow, Southwest Rim, and Blue Creek trails. Horses are not permitted in picnic areas, on nature trails, the Santa Elena and Boquillas Canyon Trails, or the Pine Canyon Trail. The Chisos Mountain and Burro Mesa trails are day use only.

Food and Water

Grazing within the park is not permitted; you must bring your own feed. Stock may be watered in the Rio Grande and at springs not used for domestic water supply. Be prepared to haul water for your stock as springs are unreliable, especially during winter months. Check current spring conditions at a visitor center when you arrive. All horse manure and feed remnants must be removed from the park

Camping with Horses

You may camp with your horses at several of the park's primitive road campsites. The Hannold Draw primitive campsite, located 4.8 miles north of Panther Junction, has a corral large enough for 8 horses. If you plan to bring horses to the park, you may reserve this campsite up to 10 weeks in advance by calling **432 477-1158**.

Stock Use Regulations

Visitors are welcome to bring and use personally owned livestock as long as they understand and abide by the rules and regulations governing the use of livestock. A backcountry day use permit is required for



all horse and stock use and may be obtained at any visitor center, free of charge.

All gravel roads are open to horse riders. Horses are not permitted on paved roads or the shoulders of paved roads.

Cross country horse travel (not on some trails) is permitted throughout the park, except for the Chisos Mountains area.

Horse use in the Chisos Mountains is limited to the Laguna Meadow Trail, the Southwest Rim to the junction with the Boot Canyon Trail, and the Blue Creek

Trail. Horse trailers may be parked in the Chisos Basin amphitheater parking lot and horses unloaded. From there equestrians may take the trail (0.5 miles) from the parking area up to the main trailhead area to access the Laguna Meadow trail.

Horses are not permitted on the interpretive nature trails throughout the park since they were only designed for foot travel. The short trails into Santa Elena and Boquillas Canyons are also restricted to pedestrians only. The Pine Canyon Trail in the Pine Canyon Designated Natural Research Area is closed to horses.

Horses are not permitted in developed campgrounds, picnic areas, near eating or sleeping facilities, or other areas of concentrated visitor use. All areas of domestic water supply or other sanitation facilities are closed to horses.

Horses may not be taken into Mexico and brought back into the United States without proper authorization from the United States Department of Agriculture.

Backcountry riders must provide controlled overnight maintenance of their animals, including the provision of commercial feed. Grazing within the park is not allowed. Water must generally be hauled to the stock in the lower elevations of the park, where a semi-desert climate prevails. Stock may be watered at the Rio Grande and springs that are not utilized for domestic water supply. Check with park rangers for spring water flows in various areas of the park.

Areas of quicksand may be encountered along the streams, washes, and the Rio Grande. Desert vegetation such as lechuguilla and cactus can injure livestock.

Reasonable consideration must be given to public safety. Stock loading and unloading sites must be selected with consideration to the safety of onlookers as well as the stock. Riders must slow their horses to a walk when meeting people on foot.

Permits are required for overnight camping. All backcountry campsites are available on a first come, first-served basis, except for the Hannold Draw campsite, which you can reserve up to ten weeks ahead of time. If you are unable to arrive by 6:00 PM on the first day of the reservation at Hannold Draw, you should contact the park at **432-477-1158**. Failure to do so may result in a cancellation of the reservation.

Only the following backcountry campsites are open to horses:

Site Name/Number	Number of horses
K-Bar 2	4
Hannold Draw	8
Nine Point Draw	4
Nugent Mountain 2	4
Glenn Springs 2	4
La Clocha 1	4
Dominguez Trailhead	4
Loop Camp 1 & 2	4 each
Johnson's Ranch 1 & 2	4 @ JR1; 2 @ JR2
Buenos Aires 1	4

A corral is available at Hannold Draw Campsite. Many of the campsites are located on unimproved gravel roads which may be inaccessible to horse trailers. Check at a visitor center for current road conditions.

Overnight camping with horses is prohibited within 100 yards of any water source, within 1/2 mile of any developed area or road, within 100 yards of any historic structure, or that portion of the park known as the Oak Springs/Cattail Falls area.

Manure, excess hay, other feed, and bedding in campsites where horses are permitted must be cleaned up and removed from the park.

Note: Generator use is not allowed in the backcountry, or at any backcountry campsite.



MOTORCYCLES

Motorcycles are very popular in Big Bend. The winding mountain highways, amazing vistas and low traffic are a perfect combination for motorcycles of all descriptions. The extensive back roads in the area offer loads of challenging fun for the dual sport crowd. Above all, local businesses are extremely motorcycle friendly, and sponsor two well-attended rallies per year.

Big Bend is one of the best places in Texas, maybe the world, to ride a motorcycle. There are hundreds of

miles of scenic paved highways with mountains and curves galore.

Traffic is light in one of the least densely populated areas in the US, and the **weather** is good most of the time. **Ride Texas Magazine** conducts an annual **Readers Poll** for favorite roads. 4 of the top 5 roads named in the **2007 Poll** go through the Big Bend area.

Big Bend businesses are motorcycle friendly. When you see a sign that says “**Bikers Welcome**“, you know they mean it. **The Big Bend Ride for Trails** is a rally held every October to benefit needed improvements in Big Bend National Park. This is a great event with a poker run through some of the most fantastic scenery in Texas. Great food and live music both nights with dancing until closing time at midnight on Friday and 1:00 am on Saturday.

NIGHT LIFE

Along with a variety of dining options in Marathon, Big Bend National Park, Terlingua, Study Butte and Lajitas, there is a surprising night life with live music at several locations just about every weekend, almost nightly during busy seasons. Terlingua has become known for its burgeoning music scene, with 3 venues in the Ghost Town. In Marathon, the Gage Hotel and Eve’s Garden Bed and Breakfast often host live music, especially in summer when the Big Bend Big Bend high country enjoys the coolest temperatures in Texas. Lajitas’ Thirsty Goat Saloon hosts local singer/songwriters on a regular basis. Wherever you stay in Big Bend, chances are good that you can catch some really good music during and after a great meal. The Adventure doesn’t when the sun goes down.



River Trips

Five spectacular river canyons in Big Bend offer incredible opportunities to kayak, canoe or raft the Rio Grande. The river is not difficult for beginning and intermediate paddlers at normal river flows, and some sections are ideal for novices. Bring your own gear, rent equipment from local outfitters, or take a fully equipped guided trip from two hours to ten days.

Professionally guided trips have an excellent record for safety and guest comfort and offer a wide variety of options to suit the first timer as well as the experienced river traveler.



Most outfitters provide equipment rental and transportation for folks who want to do it on their own. Before undertaking any trip without a guide, be aware that you may be responsible for the full cost of damaged or lost rented equipment and the cost of any required rescue service.

Big Bend River Tours , FM 170 near the junction of FM 170 and TX 118. **800-545-4240, local 371-3033**

Desert Sports, FM 170, 5 miles west of the junction of FM 170 and TX 118. 888-989-6900, local 371-2727

Far Flung Outdoor Center, FM 170 near junction of FM 170 and TX 118. **800-839-7238, local 371-2633**

SIGHT SEEING



There is more to Big Bend than can be seen in a lifetime. Big Bend National Park is the main destination, and together with neighboring Big Bend Ranch State Park, there are a million acres of spectacular vistas, shadowy canyons, and rugged desert mountains that visitors explore by road, river, and trail.

The Big Bend region of Texas offers visitors unique sight-seeing opportunities, including the largest state park in Texas. The area boasts amazing sights, activities and destinations.

Take a look at some of the awesome sights in Big Bend National Park.

Big Bend Ranch State Park is the largest state park in Texas. It features unique volcanic landscapes and secluded hiking and biking trails. The park offers an adventurous array of destinations and sights in its 275,000-acre preserve. There are many backcountry campsites and unpaved roads for exploring the desert uplands.

Scenic Drives

Ross Maxwell Scenic Drive

Ross Maxwell Scenic Drive is the most interesting of the paved sightseeing routes in Big Bend National Park, giving the greatest variety of habitats, geology and a variety of interesting short walks and interpretive pull overs. The road skirts the western slopes of the Chisos Mountains, climbing up to one the park's most outstanding views at Sotol Vista, then winding down to parallel the Rio Grande at Castolon Historic District and winding up at **Santa Elena Canyon** trailhead, where the pavement ends. Heading south from the Ross Maxwell junction, there are a number of pullovers to interpretive sites, trailheads to short and longer hikes, and scenic vistas.

Old Sam Nail Ranch - a short path leads to an abandoned old ranch building along Cottonwood Creek.

Chimneys Trailhead- A 5-mile round trip moderate hike to interesting geological formations, or continue on to Luna's Jacal on the Maverick Road, about 7 miles total.

Blue Creek Ranch - a ranch house made out of native rock near the trailhead to Blue Creek Canyon

Sotol Vista - The view shown below is one of the best in the park

Burro Mesa Pour-Off - a 1/2-mile trail leads into a box canyon and a dramatic high pour-off.

Tuff Canyon - a short trail leads to an overlook and inside the canyon itself.



Castolon Historic District- Buildings from the early 1900's farming community including an old store, troop barracks, and private residences. A small store offers cold drinks, snacks, lunch material, ice cream etc.

Cottonwood Campground- Developed campsites with tables, running water, and chemical toilets, underneath shady Cottonwood trees, right by the Rio Grande. Excellent location for watching birds and wildlife.

There are several pullouts with views of the Rio Grande, before arriving at **Santa Elena Canyon**, a Big Bend "Must See". At this point, travelers may continue ahead on the all gravel Maverick Road 14 miles back to the western gate of Big Bend National Park, or backtrack on the paved Ross Maxwell Drive.

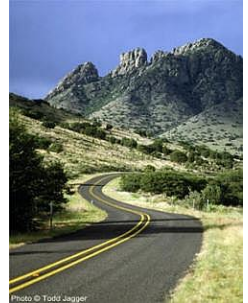
Camino del Rio, or River Road is state highway 170 between Lajitas and Presidio. For over 30 miles, El Camino twists and winds with the Rio Grande, crossing arroyos, climbing mountains, and hugging canyon walls. The "Big Hill" has one of the steepest grades on a highway in Texas, and at the top, the view looks east to the Chisos Mountains 75 miles, and west into Colorado Canyon and mountain ranges deep into Mexico. Much of the route is within Big Bend Ranch State Park. Along the way, there are several scenic pullovers and river access points. Stop in at the Barton Warnock Center in Lajitas for information and interpretive literature.



Use extreme caution on the River Road. The roadway is narrow and there are few shoulders. The "Big Hill" can be a challenge for motor homes, motor coaches, and trucks hauling trailers. Make sure your brakes work well; there has been a number of fatal accidents over the years. Open grazing is allowed, and it is not unusual to find cows, horses, burros or mules on or right next to the pavement. Drive slowly, smell the flowers.

Fort Davis -- The Scenic Loop Drive

Fort Davis is the starting point for one of the most scenic and uncrowned drives in Texas and America. Seventy-five miles long, the drive leaves Fort Davis on Texas 118, proceeds up Limpia Canyon past Mts. Locke and Fowlkes and the McDonald Observatory and then into Madera Canyon and a quiet, pine shaded picnic area. After a left turn on Texas 166, the road passes Mt. Livermore and Sawtooth Mountain, then gradually descends past a prominent ridge lined with wind generators toward the southeast side of the mountains, with broad views to the Sierra Viejo Mountains along the Rio Grande to the south. As you approach Fort Davis again on Texas 166, the Puertacita Mountains and Miter Peak are straight ahead.



Highest elevation on the Loop is about 6700 feet, making it the highest public highway in Texas. For a detailed narrative on the Loop, which takes about 1.5 hours to drive, ask for the Fort Davis Texas Visitor's Guide.

Marfa -- Pinto Canyon Road - FM 2810

Starting at Highway 90 in Marfa, FM 2810 is considered the favorite drive, bike ride and star viewing site by many of the locals.

The first 30 miles is paved road with beautiful expanses of ranch land and mountain vistas. The remaining 20 miles of dirt road switches back through Pinto Canyon. This portion of the road is challenging and only recommended for vehicles that are designed for off road driving.



Almost the entire stretch of this road traverses private ranch property. Travelers are warned to remain on the road and to follow all posted warning signs.

Also a few miles from the end of the road are the cutoff for Chinati Hot Springs. A rustic and delightful retreat opens to the public for picnics, camping and overnight visits.



SHOPPING

Professional surveys suggest that the most popular vacation activity is shopping and in Big Bend unique local merchants have made many interesting shopping opportunities available.

Marathon

Evans Gallery – James Evans has been photographing the Big Bend for more than 20 years. He has two photographic books; Big Bend Pictures and Crazy from the Heat. Evans Gallery is located 4 doors East of the Gage Hotel on Highway 90, between the bookstore and the bank. Hours are inconsistent. It is best to call first. Marci or James **432-386-4366**

Pitaya Verde is a small boutique specializing in clothing, accessories and jewelry with a free-spirited, tiny-bit western flair. Next to the Gage Hotel on U.S. Hwy. 90. **303-587-7698**

Study Butte

Quilts, Etc. is located on 118 just south of the Junction of highways 118 and 170 and features homemade quilts in a variety of styles and fabrics. Quilts, Etc. at **432 371-2292**

Many Stones – Fine jewelry hand crafted by the proprietor, stained glass, precious and semi-precious stones, mineral specimens and nice variety of cacti, bromeliads, and desert plants. Open most of the time. TX 118, just south of the junction of FM 170 and TX 118. **432-371-2994**

Brer' Rabbit Curios – Is in the **Chisos Mining Company** office. It is a classic souvenir shop, neat stuff for not much money. They feature a selection of rocks and fossils, along with kitschy memorabilia. No Santa Fe styled art, or pricey cowboy chic. Located in Chisos Mining Company Motel. FM 170, Study Butte. **432-371-2254**

Sotol Products – From Sterling silverware wind chimes to tractor seat patio chairs. Lots of unique, fun antiques, collectibles, odd stuff, along with canes and walking sticks made locally from sotol, a native plant of the Chihuahuan Desert. Next to the Study Butte Store, TX 118 south of Rough Run Creek.

Cycle Tek -- expert providers for all motorcycle needs **432-371-2560**

Big Bend River Tours , FM 170 near the junction of FM 170 and TX 118. **800-545-4240, local 371-3033**

Far Flung Outdoor Center, FM 170 near junction of FM 170 and TX 118. **800-839-7238, local 371-2633**

Shot Time Liquorz-n-Artz is located on TX 170 just east of Far Flung, a few hundred yards from the junction of TX 118 and offers a selection of local artwork along with liquor, wine and barware. Open Monday thru Saturday 10am-9pm. **432 371-3155.**

Terlingua

Terlingua Trading Company & Book Store – The Trading Company boasts an extraordinary inventory of southwestern U. S. and Mexican influenced gifts and collectibles, including an outstanding book and map section. Open 10:00am – 9:00pm almost always. **432-371-2234**

Leapin' Lizard Studio and Gallery The watercolor studio for owner Bryn Moore, also features fine and folk art, photography and jewelry of many other local artists and craftspeople. Summer Hours Thursday-Monday 3:00-7:00 pm. **432-371-2775**

Big Bend National Park

The Chisos Mountains Lodge Gift Shop – Located in the Chisos Basin adjacent to the Lodge reception and restaurant, this well-equipped gift shop has jewelry, souvenirs, videos, photographic supplies, T-shirts, books, cards, walking sticks and much more. Lots of well-made unique Big Bend memorabilia as well as useful travel items. 7:00am – 8:00pm daily. **432-477-2291**

Convenience store offers snacks, beer, drinks and other necessities.

Lajitas

Lajitas Resort and Spa offer nice shopping alternatives.

Agave Spa– Full service spa offering treatment from Desert Sage Massage, Rio Grande Mud Wrap and Peppermint Foot Soak. Salon for nails and hair. Call for appointment. **432-424-5146**

Christina's World – Eclectic jewelry, imported folk-art, and unique creations by local artisans. On the Boardwalk. **432-424-3250**

Red Rock Outfitters– Outdoor wear, camping equipment, hiking gear. Tours of all kinds including river rafting and canoeing, horse trips, mountain bicycling, and interpretive tours may be arranged. On the Boardwalk. **432-424-5000**

SPAS AND RETREATS

Some people come to a place like Big Bend to relax and rejuvenate. Get a massage or a spa treatment, or try out a yoga retreat in an absolutely magnificent setting.

Casa La Vista Retreat Center, 3 minutes from downtown Marathon, believes that beauty and vitality are the natural results of relaxation, rejuvenation, nurturance, challenge and healthy food choices. The Center's goal is to help guests find a peaceful place of serenity inside themselves and unlock their own natural beauty and vitality. **1-432-386-2222**

Spa at the Gage services include full body massages, facials, body treatments and full day packages. Check out the eucalyptus steam room. **1-800-884-GAGE**

The Agave Spa at Lajitas Golf Resort offers specialty massages, facials, and body treatments designed for the purpose of relaxation; using native herbal ingredients that nourish and hydrate the skin. **1-877-LAJITAS**

Terlingua Ranch Lodge

432-371-3146

Office is open from 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM Monday thru Sunday

The Big Bend of Texas is a land of giant bluebonnets, spectacular sunsets, and the largest landscapes in the state. It is also the home of **Terlingua Ranch Lodge**.



Terlingua Ranch is the Big Bend. Situated between Big Bend National Park on the east and Big Bend State Park on the west, Terlingua Ranch offers solitude and all the incredible beauty of this unique country. We invite families and groups to come enjoy the Big Bend desert with us. Pets are also welcome, *and* remember to bring the leash!

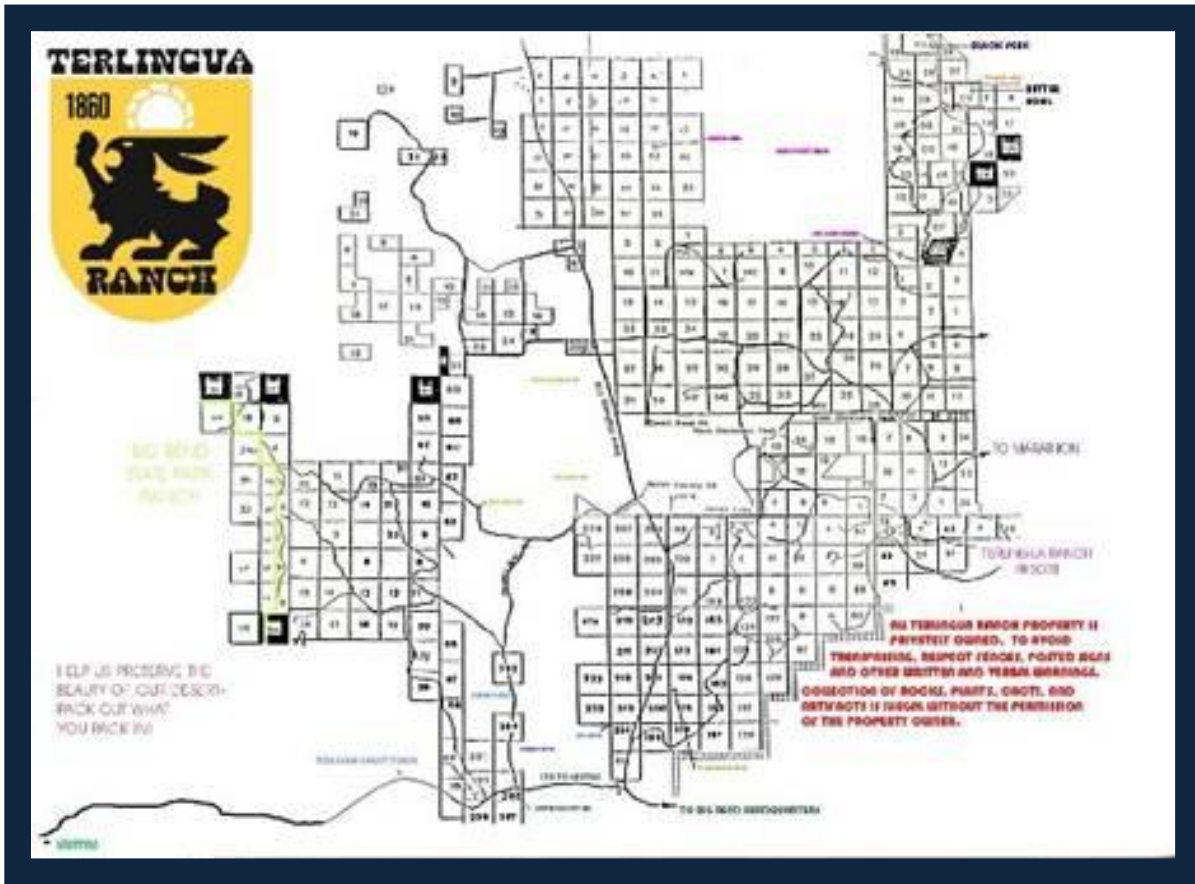
The Lodge hides itself in the heart of this vast and stunning wilderness area, at the foot of the Corozones Peaks and Christmas Mountains, offering visitors the opportunity to experience one of the last frontiers in the continental United States.

Terlingua Ranch Lodge prides itself on its solitude and peace, well away from the hustle and bustle of cities and interstates. We are pleased to share our little bit of heaven with friends from all over the world.



Travelers heading south from Alpine will travel about 62 miles and then turn left at the Terlingua Ranch sign. The lodge facilities are located 16 miles from the highway, on Terlingua Ranch Road, which is paved for the first 13 miles. The remaining three miles to the Lodge is a well maintained dirt road accessible by most vehicles.

Terlingua Ranch covers over 200,000 acres of prime Chihuahuan Desert. We have maps of the area for sale in the Ranch office. Check out our links page for additional maps.



Bad Rabbit Café

432-371-2244

Monday – Thursday

7:00 AM – 8:00 PM

Friday – Saturday

7:00 AM – 9:00 PM

Sunday

7:00 AM – 7:00 PM



Extended hours for busy times such as Hunting Season and Spring Break.
Call 432-371-2244 for more information and event schedule.

For large groups, the Cafe has two rooms with an archway separation. It comes equipped with 17 square tables seating four, one octagon table seating eight, one six-foot table and one eight-foot table. There is a total of 66 matching chairs. A hot and cold buffet table is available and sack lunches can also be arranged.

The Cafe and Bunkhouse building are the original Ranch structure, made of stone and masonry, and dubbed the Whitehouse (Whitehouse Mountain sits just behind it). The house was upstairs and the basement was for animals and stock. Later the house became the real estate office and the downstairs was made into a bunkhouse for hunters.

Cafe Patio

The Cafe Patio is a beautiful stone patio. It's a great spot to check your email, drink a cold one, have a picnic and enjoy the view. It adjoins the Cafe and the horseshoe pit.

There is a stage, picnic tables and a large BBQ grill for any sized event: weddings, family reunions, anniversary and birthday parties. Electric outlets are available for bands and stage lights are already installed. There is ample parking and also handicapped parking spaces. The pool and cabana with firepit are just a few steps away. The Bunkhouse event room is downstairs from the Cafe. Our cold storage locker is also adjoining for an old-fashioned pig roast or fiesta. For patio reservations contact the office.



Terlingua Ranch Lodge Cafe Patio

Airstrip



Fly in, have lunch, a dip in the pool and a comfy room. Prevailing wind direction is E; seasonal direction in summer is NW and in winter is S.

1E2 (ICAO: n/a) TERLINGUA RANCH AIRPORT ALPINE, TEXAS USA
Latitude: 29 27' 0.70? North Longitude: 103 23' 54.64? West
Elevation: 3769' (1149m) Max. Runway Length: 4700' (1433m)
CTAF: 122.900; Runway 2/20 (4700' x 80'), Surface: GRAVEL (Good cond.)

WE STRONGLY RECOMMEND LANDING 20 AND TAKEOFF 02 AS THE STRIP HAS A MARKED UP-SLOPE TO THE SOUTHWEST AND RISING TERRAIN. AIRSTRIP IS 180 DEGREES FROM FORT STOCKTON VOR 100 N.M.; 140 DEGREES FROM MARFA VOR 68 N.M.



Terlingua Ranch Lodge Airstrip

Tie downs are available, bring your own tie ropes. The nearest AVGAS is available at Alpine Municipal Airport, 60 miles to the north, or Lajitas Airport, 30 miles to the west. We sometimes have a courtesy van. Rooms, cafe and pool are all within walking distance. Call beforehand and we will meet you to help with luggage and transport.

To rent a vehicle contact Rick Kelly at [Alpine Auto Rental](#) at 1-800-894-3463

Swimming Pool

THE POOL IS OPEN – 10 AM to 10PM

Our pool is a rare pleasure in the desert. Open from 10:00 AM - 10:00 PM seven days a week with a pool and adjoining cabana patio, fire ring and large BBQ pit, it's the perfect place to unwind with friends, family and guests. Bad Rabbit Cafe is next door with food and beverages. No glass allowed inside pool fencing.

Pool use is included with each room, RV or camp site rental. If you are not a guest at the Lodge there is a \$25 annual pass for Members In Good Standing or a \$5.00 per day per vehicle for all other guests. Pass keys are available at the office.



Gift Shop

Our retail gift shop provides the Terlingua Ranch Bad Rabbit shirts, ball caps, bandanas, jewelry, koozies, mugs and more. We also carry retail maps of the region. Contact the Front Desk to have your gifts mailed today! 432-371-3146.

Ice bags (10 lb.) are for sale during office hours at the Lodge office or can be purchased from the Cafe upon availability.

Horseshoe Pit

Available next to the Cafe patio on the uphill side. See the Café staff for horseshoes.

Laundry

The laundry room has several washers and dryers available from 10 AM – 10 PM. Modified hours from Spring Break are 6 PM – 6 AM. Because of mineral content in well water, we recommend saving your whites for when you return home. \$2 per wash load and \$0.25 increments for the dryer.



Bathhouse

After a day of fun in the desert, enjoy a hot shower in the men's' or women's bathhouse facility. Open 24 hours year-round. Free.

Adjoins the pool, Campground A & B and horse camp.



Cold Storage Locker

Our cold storage locker is open during official Texas hunting season or special events. There is a \$25 fee per animal for storage. Game requires a hunter's registration tag. Our office checks for a license but not a permit.

Bunkhouse Event Room

The Bunkhouse is the original ranch building made from rock and mortar. There is ample room for seating and a wood dance floor in the center. There is a very basic PA sound system and a large screen TV for films. It is wheelchair accessible. There is an additional room in the back for smaller meetings. For reservations contact the office.

WiFi

There is free and public wifi available throughout the grounds.

Map Room

The Terlingua Ranch Lodge offices double as the POATRI corporate headquarters. Our map room is maintained for owners as well as potential property owners. It contains maps of the entire 210,000 acres of Terlingua Ranch association property, showing tracts and roads. For more information, contact our Property Owner Services Administrator, Andrea Hinkle.



Terlingua Ranch Lodge Map Room

Water Sales

We sell non-potable water (water not tested or monitored) for agricultural use at \$0.03 per gallon during business hours, 7 days a week 9:00 AM - 5:00 PM.

There is a potable water tap at the Laundry next to the picnic table. Potable water is available during office hours. Up to 25 gallons per week per family for free. Additional potable water available for \$0.06/gal.

Air Hose

There is an air hose located behind the main office next to the maintenance barn and stables that is available 24/7 for free.

Security

We have a Maintenance & Security staff, Mr. Dean Bucher, who lives on the grounds and is available to assist our guests and visitors. His phone is 432-371-2960. For serious emergencies call 9-1-1 from the red phone box at the pool cabana gate.

Attractions:

Big Bend Region: Big Bend National Park, Big Bend Ranch State Park, Christmas Mountains

Terlingua Ranch Lodge is located between Big Bend National Park on the east and Big Bend Ranch State Park on the west. We are the gatekeepers for TSUS. We are the only access to the Christmas Mountains by vehicle, offering visitors the opportunity to experience one of the last frontiers in the continental United States.

Christmas Mountains access requires a signed permit from our office. Hiking, biking and horseback riding are some of the recreational activities allowed. There is no fee for access. In order to drive up to the peak, you will need to leave a \$75 key deposit. Vehicles must be high clearance 4WD/AWD and only one full-sized vehicle is allowed up at a time.



Christmas Mountains View From The Peak



*Christmas Mountains
Photo by Mary Jane Cantu*

All roads are private. If you leave the road you are trespassing. Leave no trace i.e. do not remove any rocks, artifacts or plants. Carry your trash out with you. Carry plenty of water at all times. There is limited cell phone service throughout much of the region.



Horseback and River Tours

There are local businesses who offer horseback riding tours and river rafting tours. Ask the Front Desk for details and contact information for bookings.

Lodge Hiking Trail

There is a walking trail going up between Whitehouse and Bell Mountains which leads to a bench seat with a fantastic view. Ask the Front Desk for a map at check in.



Terlingua Ranch Lodge Trail



Bookclub

The Reading Round the Ranch bookclub meets in the cafe on the first Wednesday of every month at 6:00 PM (except during summer). Contact Tom Ramsay for details and information at 432-371-2188. Free.

Music

There is usually music scheduled at the Bad Rabbit Café on weekend nights all year-round, and nightly during Spring Break. Call for information or booking, 432-371-2244. Tips are appreciated.



Potluck

Potluck at Bad Rabbit Café is on the third Thursday of every month. All Terlingua Ranch property owners and their guest are welcome!

Bring a dish or dishes of your choice with serving utensils. Bring your own plate and silverware if possible. Drinks are available for purchase from the Cafe.

Stargazing

Our desert offers some of the most unobstructed views in the Texas sky. You can set up your telescopes outside your room and be assured that the bright lights of Alpine 80 miles away will not interfere with your viewing. The McDonald Observatory is a day trip away and offers day and night activities.



Terlingua Night Skies



Photo by Aperture Of My Soul

Birding

Among others, we have nesting Lucifer Hummingbirds, Gray Vireos and Elf Owls. During peak migration it is not unusual to see over 60 species daily. This is the place for serious birders and bird photographers. For information on local birding, call the Front Desk at 432-371-3146.

ATV/RV Riding

Moderate speeds with low noise and dust around residences constitutes good behavior. All roads are private. If you leave the road you are trespassing. Leave no trace – do not remove any rocks, artifacts or plants. Carry your trash out with you. Carry plenty of water at all times. There is limited cell phone service throughout much of the region. Guests of Terlingua Ranch Lodge in violation of on-road or off-

road restrictions will be asked to leave immediately and will not be allowed to return to the Lodge. Damage to Terlingua Ranch roads by improper use of recreational vehicles will result in the same action. Obey all landowner posted signs and purple fence posts.

In the immediate vicinity of the Lodge, recreational vehicles must maintain a 10 mph speed limit and must be respectful of other vehicular traffic and foot traffic. Recreational vehicles are not allowed on the patio, pool pavilion or airstrip. Wheelies, donuts, racing, littering and other such activities are strictly prohibited.

Riders age sixteen or under must be accompanied by their parent or legal guardian.

Hunting

Hunting is limited to your own property or with written permission from a property owner. All persons living on or visiting Terlingua Ranch are subject to Texas state game laws. Texas Parks and Wildlife and the Brewster County Sheriff's Department enforce these game laws. It is each individual's responsibility to be informed of these state game laws. We have a cold storage locker available for game during official Texas Hunting season.

VISIT BOQUILLAS

Boquillas is a small village in Mexico that sits on the Eastern side of Big Bend National Park. The community features an international port of entry to cross the Rio Grande. The crossing is open Wednesday through Sunday year around from 9:00am until 6:00pm. It is advisable to arrive back at the port of entry 30 minutes before closing time. During December and January, the crossing hours may be changed to open at 8:00am and close at 5:00pm. The doors will be locked promptly at closing time.



Important rules:

1. US citizens must have a valid US Passport, or a passport/crossing card (see below for info)
2. International travelers must have a valid passport and be registered with the ESTA visa waiver program (<https://www.cbp.gov/travel/international-visitors/esta>)
3. Documentation must be presented to Mexican Immigration officials both upon arrival and departure from Boquillas.
4. Upon return to the US, documentation is scanned and transmitted to the US immigration office in El Paso, where an official views the document remotely as well as the person presenting. Via a telephone connection, the official asks the standard questions: a. What was the purpose of your trip? b. What are you bringing back? Please note that visitors may not bring back food products, alcoholic beverages, or anything made from animals or parts of animals
5. Big Bend National Park staff are on site to help with the re-entry process and give out information.

What to expect:

1. There is a row boat with a trained oarsman that is available for crossing. The cost is \$5 round trip. Tickets can be purchased at Rio Grande Village Store, or directly from a Boquillas Internationally Ferry representative upon landing in Mexico.
2. When the river is low, some people choose to wade the river, which they do at their own risk. The fees

- Was issued in your current name (or you can document your name change with an original or certified copy of your marriage certificate, divorce decree, or court order)

If any of the above statements do not apply to you, you must Apply in Person using form DS-11.

Fees

Form	Application Fee	Execution Fee	More Information
DS-82	\$30	\$0	Renew by Mail
DS-11	\$30 (\$15 for 16 and under)	\$25	Apply In Person

Please note:

- Passport cards can only be mailed to you using First-Class Mail.
- You can use Form DS-82 to renew your passport book at the same time you apply for your passport card.

VEHICLE TOURS

There’s a lot of country to cover in Big Bend. Big Bend National Park has 100 miles of paved road, and at least 150 of backcountry dirt roads. Highway 170 between Lajitas and Redford is one of the most spectacular drives in the US. Guided tours are available in a variety of vehicles, from luxury SUV’s to rugged open air Jeeps with cloth canopies.



Guides do not just drive, they are knowledgeable about the local area and specialize in explaining the history, geology, flora and fauna of the area.

Far Flung Outdoor Center Jeep and ATV tours. FM 170 near junction of FM 170 and TX 118. **800-839-7238, local 371-2633**

Big Bend River Tours , FM 170 near the junction of FM 170 and TX 118. **800-545-4240, local 371-3033**

Big Bend Overland Tours offers guided interpretive tours in a 4x4 Ford Expedition. Tour Big Bend National Park and vicinity in climate controlled comfort. Regularly scheduled tours to a variety of locations or custom adventures are available. **800-848-2363, local 432 371-2218**

Big Bend Expeditions offers guided 4x4 tours of the rugged country near their property, taking guests to remote sites of archeological and geological interest. **866-371-3110, local 432-371-3110**

Big Bend National Park – 432-477-2251

Splendid Isolation, the Big Bend...

There is a place in Far West Texas where night skies are dark as coal and rivers carve temple-like canyons in ancient limestone. Here, at the end of the road, hundreds of bird species take refuge in a solitary mountain range surrounded by weather-beaten desert. Tenacious cactus bloom in sublime southwestern sun, and diversity of species is the best in the country. This magical place is Big Bend. Rising nearly a mile above the desert floor, the Chisos Mountains offer cooler temperatures for backcountry camping during the summer.



Operating Hours & Seasons

Big Bend is very remote; it is not unusual for visitors to arrive after normal business hours. Park entrances are always open, but entrance fee stations and visitor centers may be closed before you arrive.



*Chisos Basin Visitor Center
NPS Photo/Ann Wildermuth*

Park Entrances

Park entrances are open 24 hours daily, all year. Entrance fee stations have variable seasons and hours.

OPERATING HOURS Effective May 01, 2015

Hours are subject to change without notice. For more information, please contact: Forever Resorts at 432-477-2291.

Visitor Centers

Chisos Basin

Open daily, 8:30am–4:00pm. Closed for lunch. Reduced hours on Christmas day.

Panther Junction

Open daily, 9:00am–5:00pm. Reduced hours on Christmas day.

Persimmon Gap

Open daily, 9:00am-4:00pm. Closed for lunch.

Castolon

Open seasonally, November-April, 10:00am-4:00pm. Closed for lunch.

Rio Grande Village

Open seasonally, November-April, 8:30am-4:00pm. Closed for lunch.

Concession Hours**Panther Junction Service Station**

7:30am-5:30pm

Pumps - 24/7

Chisos Basin Store

8:00am-8:00pm

Chisos Mountains Lodge

Desk/Gift Shop: 7:00am-9:00pm

Restaurant

Breakfast: 7:00am-10:00am

Lunch: 11:00am-3:00pm

Dinner: 5:00pm-8:00pm

Lounge: 12:00pm-8:00pm



Panther Junction Service Station
NPS Photo/Cookie Ballou

Rio Grande Village Store

8:30am-5:30pm

Showers/Laundry-23/7 (closed one hour for cleaning daily)

Castolon Store

9:00am-3:00pm

Arriving After Hours

Park entrances are always open and you can arrive at any hour, but entrance fee stations and visitor centers may be closed after normal business hours. The three main park campgrounds are always open (pending site availability); self-register at the campground entrance. Lodge guests should contact the lodge if arriving after business hours.



Rio Grande Village at Sunset
NPS Photo/Cookie Ballou

Boquillas Crossing Port of Entry

Open Wednesday-Sunday, 9:00am-6:00pm (summer; daylight saving time), 8:00am-5:00pm (winter; standard time).

ENTRANCE FEES & PASSES

All park visitors are required to purchase a recreational use pass upon entering Big Bend National Park. Big Bend participates in the congressionally authorized Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act. Under this program, parks keep 80% of all fees collected; the remaining 20% will be deposited in a special account to be used in parks where fees are not collected. Funds generated by these fees are used to accomplish projects that parks have been unable to fund through yearly congressional allocations.



Maverick Entrance Station
NPS Photo/Cookie Ballou

Entrance Passes

All federal lands passes are issued and accepted at Big Bend National Park. Passes are non-transferable.

- **Big Bend Annual Pass:** \$50 (good for one year from purchase date)
Covers entrance fees to Big Bend National Park. Pass is available at Big Bend National Park entrance stations or any Visitor Center. Pass is non-transferable.
- **Vehicle:** \$25
Admits one private, non-commercial vehicle (15 passenger capacity or less); valid for 7 days.
- **Motorcycle:** \$20
Admits one non-commercial motorcycle; valid for 7 days.
- **Individuals:** \$12
Admits one individual. Typically used for bicyclists and pedestrians; valid for 7 days.
- **Non-commercial groups:**
Organized groups such as Scouts, youth groups, churches, reunions, clubs, etc. that do not qualify for an academic fee waiver are charged as follows:
\$25 per non-commercial vehicle with a capacity of 15 or less.
\$12 per person traveling in a non-commercial vehicle with a capacity of 16 or more. Fees will not exceed the commercial rate for the same sized vehicle.
Youth 15 and younger are free. Individuals or families with a valid annual or lifetime pass may use their pass for themselves and up to 3 others.
- **Commercial Groups:**
Companies conducting business in the park are required to obtain a **commercial use authorization**. The only exception is companies travelling in a 26 person capacity or greater vehicle; such vehicles are charged a flat fee of \$200 (commercial use authorization not required).
- **Educational Groups:**
Groups entering the park for education purposed are encouraged to check the **academic fee waiver** for application and qualification information.

Permits & Reservations

Backcountry Use Permits

A Backcountry Use Permit is required for backpacking, primitive car camping, horse/stock use, and river use. Backcountry Use Permits must be obtained in person at a park visitor center and may be obtained up to 24 hours in advance of the trip. A backcountry use fee of \$12.00 per permit is charged for all overnight use.



Bird Watching Tour at Rio Grande Village
NPS Photo/Reine Wonite



NPS Photo/Cookie Ballou

Things to know about backcountry permits:

- Permits will be issued in person only, during normal visitor center hours, and may be obtained up to 24 hours in advance of the trip.
- Permit cost is \$12 for overnight use (\$6 with an applicable pass). There is no charge for day-use river or stock permits.
- Permits are issued on a first come, first-served basis. During peak visitation periods permits are in high demand, so plan an alternative itinerary.
- Permit authorizes camping only at designated sites in the Chisos Mountains or at designated backcountry roadside campsites. You must choose your campsite(s) at the time the permit is issued. Zone camping also requires specifying a particular zone for each night.
- Permits may be written for up to 14 consecutive nights.
- Permit changes may be made without an additional fee, provided no new days are added. Permit changes must be made in person.

Special Use Permits

A Special Use Permit is required for nontraditional park use and activities such as weddings and groups of 40 or more hiking in the Chisos Mountains. Requests for a permit may be made by writing the Superintendent or calling the park 432-477-1108. Allow at least two weeks for processing. Fees may apply.



Motorcycle Rally
NPS Photo/Cookie Ballou

A special use permit (SUP) is required for activities within National Parks that benefit an individual, group, or organization rather than the public at large. This is to protect the park resources and public interests, as well as reduce the potential for conflict between your group and park guests.

Such activities include, but are not limited to:

- Weddings and commitment ceremonies
- Memorials and the spreading of remains
- Sporting events
- Cycling clubs activities, automobile and motorcycle rallies
- Worship services
- Trips organized by scouting groups, churches, academic institutions, or other non-profit organizations
- Groups of 40 or more hiking in the Chisos Mountains

Application Form

Please allow 4-6 weeks for processing. A non-refundable administrative application fee of \$25.00 (check or money order only) may be charged, depending on the activity.

For questions concerning SUPs, please call 432-477-1108.

Commercial Use Authorization

Commercial Use Authorization permits are required of all operators who provide any goods, activities, agreements, or other services to the general public which take place, at least in part, in the park, uses park resources and are undertaken for or results in compensation, monetary gain, benefit or profit to an individual, organization or corporation. (This also applies to non-profit and educational groups, if taxable income is derived).

Permit Information

Commercial Use Authorizations (CUA), are a permit issued by the park Superintendent to allow certain commercial activities within the park. Permits are required of all operators who provide any goods, activities, agreements or other services to the general public which take place, at least in part, in the park, uses park resources and are undertaken for or results in compensation, monetary gain, benefit or profit to an individual, organization or corporation.

Commercial aspects, such as advertising, negotiation of compensation, and receipt of money/compensation must occur outside of the park.

Year-round permits coincide with our fiscal year, starting October 1 and ending September 30 of the following year. Permits may also be issued for one-time use.

Application Instructions

To apply, mail: Application
 \$100 application fee (non-refundable)
 Proof of Insurance, meeting requirements
 Allow 4-6 weeks for processing

Basic Requirements

Insurance: meet all insurance requirements over duration of permit.

Conditions: comply with all park rules and permit conditions.

Submit accurate Activity Summary and Financial Report within 60 days of permit expiration.

Permit Fees

\$100 application fee, non-refundable, sent in with application
 \$400 for year-round permit, with river use
 \$300 for year-round permit, no river use
 \$200 for one-time use permit

Additionally, a cost-recovery based charge not to exceed \$5 per river user day (number of clients times number of days on river) will be charged at the conclusion of river use permits to cover costs of monitoring and managing CUA river use.

Commercial Filming Permits

Commercial filming and still photography require a film permit.

Fishing

A state fishing license is not required in Big Bend National Park, but a free fishing permit (obtained from a visitor center) is required. A state license is required on the Rio Grande Wild 7 Scenic River outside of the park. Be sure and obtain a free fishing permit at one of the park visitor centers during normal business hours, and abide by all fishing regulations.

Sometimes visiting a National Park can seem as though time is not on your side and the pace of "have to see everything" takes over. Perhaps fishing, which might seem unusual in a desert park, could be just what the "ranger" ordered. This activity is less harried, relaxing, and most of all, edible. Fishing the Rio Grande is something that is fun for visitors of all ages. And best of all it's free, and requires no Texas fishing license. All that is required is a fishing permit which may be obtained at any open visitor center. So if a lazy day by the Rio is something you might enjoy, ask a ranger about fishing opportunities here in the park.



Everybody loves to fish!
NPS Photo/Cookie Ballou

Fishing Regulations

FISHING REGULATIONS FOR BIG BEND NATIONAL PARK AND THE RIO GRANDE WILD AND SCENIC RIVER

Section 2.3 and Section 7.41, Title 36, Code of Federal Regulations, as well as State law establish the regulations for fishing in Big Bend National Park and the Rio Grande Wild and Scenic River as applicable to the United States side of the Rio Grande and certain other park waters. The regulations are condensed here for your convenience; full regulations may be examined at any Visitor Center.

- **SEASON:** Open all year
- **OPEN WATERS:** Rio Grande only
- **CLOSED WATERS:** Special ponds and springs are reserved for the preservation of rare fish and the taking or release of any form of fish life is prohibited.
- **LICENSE:** A State fishing license is not required in Big Bend National Park, but a free NPS fishing permit (obtained from a visitor center) is required. State license required on the Rio Grande Wild and Scenic River outside the Park.
- **LEGAL METHODS FOR FISHING:** Pole and line; rod, reel, and line; throw (hand) line; trot line. Trot lines (attached parallel to the bank) and throw lines (attached at one end only) must have gear tags attached marked with name, address, and date. Flagging for relocation of lines shall be tied to the line, not vegetation. Flagging and lines are to be removed when fishing is completed. Jug lines (a line tied to a free-floating device) are legal on the Rio Grande Wild and Scenic River outside the park, but must have gear tags that are marked and dated.
- **PROHIBITED METHODS:** Jug lines are illegal in the park. Fishing with traps, spears, drugs, poisons, explosives, electricity, or any other method not identified as legal is illegal. Chumming is illegal. Seines and nets are prohibited, except that minnow seines no greater in length than 20 feet may be used for taking bait minnows from the Rio Grande.
- **LIMIT:** 25 fish per person per day or in possession in Big Bend National Park. State limits apply on the Rio Grande Wild and Scenic River. Limits do not apply to bait minnows.

- **SALE OF FISH:** Fishing for profit or commercial use is prohibited.
- **BAIT:** Terrestrial and aquatic invertebrates are protected in the Park. No collecting of worms, larval insects, or other non-fish life forms is allowed. Use of live bait, except minnows obtained from the Rio Grande within the Park or within the Rio Grande Wild and Scenic River, is not allowed.
- **ABANDONMENT OF PROPERTY:** Leaving any personal property, including trot and throw lines, unattended for longer than 24 hours, without prior permission of the Superintendent, is prohibited, and any property so left may be impounded.
- **CAMPING AND BOATING PERMITS:** A permit is required for boating or backcountry camping in Big Bend National Park and overnight boating in the Rio Grande Wild and Scenic River outside the park. The permit is available free of charge from any Park Ranger or at the park visitor centers.
- **LITTER AND TRASH:** Please dispose of all trash properly. Toilet paper must be carried out as trash, not buried. Fish parts must be carried out or deposited in the main river current.
- **GENERATORS:** Generators and other portable motors or engines (excluding boat motors) cannot be operated in non-developed areas. Backcountry campsites are considered non-developed areas.
- **BOATS:** All motorboats are required to be numbered in accordance with state regulations.

Basic Information



Chisos Mountains
NPS Photo/Blake Trester

From an elevation of less than 1,800 feet along the Rio Grande to nearly 8,000 feet in the Chisos Mountains, Big Bend includes massive canyons, vast desert expanses, forested mountains, and an ever-changing river. Here you can explore one of the last remaining wild corners of the United States.

Peak Visitation

Big Bend's busy season is generally November through April, and the park is often full to capacity during Thanksgiving week, Christmas holiday season, and spring break (mid-March). Advance reservations for camping and lodging are highly recommended. To maximize your visit, plan ahead and have a flexible itinerary.



Pets

A national park is a refuge for the animals and plants living in it. Even if your pet does not chase deer, birds, or ground critters, it still presents the image and scent of a historical predator. The result is stress on the native wildlife. In addition, predators such as owls, coyotes, mountain lions, and javelinas can and do kill pets. Even large dogs cannot defend themselves against predators. Contagious diseases can also be transmitted between your dog and native coyotes and other wild animals.



A Dog on Vacation
NPS Photo/Cookie Ballou

Having a pet with you may limit some of your activities and explorations in the park. Abiding by these pet regulations will ensure a safer, more enjoyable visit for yourselves, other park visitors, your pet, and the park's wildlife.

- Pets are not allowed on trails, off roads, or on the river. Your pet can only go where your car can go.
- Pets need to be on a leash no longer than six feet in length (or in a cage) at all times.
- You may not leave your pet unattended in vehicles if it creates a danger to the animal, or if the animal becomes a public nuisance.
- If you plan to hike or take a river trip, someone must stay behind with the pet, or you will need to make arrangements with a kennel service. There is no kennel service in the park.
- Pet etiquette and park regulations require that you always clean up after your pet and dispose of waste in trash receptacles.

Visiting a Border Area

In addition to defining the curve that forms the Big Bend, the Rio Grande also serves as the international boundary between the United States and Mexico.



Boquillas Crossing Port of Entry
NPS Photo/Matthew Yarbrough

Border Crossing

Big Bend National Park shares the border with Mexico for 118 miles, and therefore can be a chance to learn about our neighbors to the south, and preserve the larger Big Bend ecosystem together. Being on the border, however, does come with its own challenges and concerns.

Throughout much of its history, the border along the Rio Grande has been fluid, allowing people of both countries to come and go as needed. However, the border is an artificial boundary imposed on the natural environment, and as such is subject to political and social pressures that continue to evolve. Increased border restrictions have led to a number of important changes that affect the international boundary in Big Bend.

Boquillas Crossing Port of Entry

The Boquillas Crossing Port of Entry is the gateway for those visitors who wish to take advantage of the opportunity to visit Mexico. Proper documentation is required to both enter Mexico and re-enter the

United States. Mexican immigration in Boquillas requires passports for all travelers of any age. Information about documentation and Boquillas is available from the staff at the Boquillas Crossing Port of Entry, or go to the U.S. Customs website for complete information on what is required: http://getyouhome.gov/html/eng_map.html

- Hours of Operation: Wednesday through Sunday, 9:00am–6:00pm (summer), 8:00am–5:00pm (winter).

Be Aware, Be Safe

- Know where you are at all times, follow good safety procedures, and use common sense. Remember, cell phone service is limited in many areas of the park.
- Keep valuables, including spare change, out of sight and lock your vehicle.
- Avoid travel on well-used but unofficial "trails".
- Do not pick up hitchhikers.
- People in distress may ask for food, water, or other assistance. It is recommended that you do not make contact with them, but note the location, and immediately notify park rangers. Lack of water is a life-threatening emergency in the desert.
- Occasional drug smuggling and border crossings occur within the park. If you see anything that looks illegal, suspicious, or out of place, please do not stop or intervene, but note the location, and call 911 or report any suspicious behavior to park staff or Border Patrol as quickly as possible.
- Ask at the visitor center or contact a ranger or a Border Patrol agent about areas where you may have concerns about traveling.

Border Merchants

Mexican Nationals may approach visitors in the park to sell souvenir items such as walking sticks, bracelets, and crafts. If you purchase their items or make a donation, you are encouraging them to cross the river, which may result in their arrest and deportation through Presidio (100 miles away). Additionally, they may be fined or incarcerated.

Items purchased are considered contraband and can be seized by officers. Rocks, minerals, archaeological items, etc. cannot be purchased, imported, or possessed in the national park. In addition, illegal trade damages natural resources, including the creation of social trails, cutting of river cane, erosion of river banks, and an increased amount of garbage along the Rio Grande. Supporting this illegal activity contributes to continued damage.

You may legally purchase crafts made in Boquillas, Mexico, or purchase Mexican hand-crafted items at camp stores in the park. These items are purchased directly from Mexican artisans and are processed through a legal Port of Entry before being brought to the park. All wholesale proceeds go to the artisans. Please check with the staff at the Boquillas Crossing Port of Entry concerning items which may be purchased in Boquillas, but may not be legal to import. Rocks, minerals, and archeological items are still illegal to purchase, import, and possess in Big Bend National Park.

Border Patrol Checkpoints

Checkpoints operated by U.S. Customs and Border Protection are located on all north/south highways leading from the Big Bend area, and are staffed at all times. Each vehicle traveling north is stopped at one of these checkpoints for a visual inspection and brief questions by a Border Patrol agent. This process is routine.

Foreign nationals planning to visit Big Bend should carry the appropriate documentation to avoid unnecessary delays, as Border Patrol agents are required to determine the immigration status of every traveler.

Weather

The old adage "if you don't like the weather, just wait a minute," often holds true in Big Bend National Park. While Big Bend generally has blue skies and warm days, the weather can change quickly and dramatically.



Desert Thunderstorm
NPS Photo/Blake Trester

Through the Year

Sunshine is abundant most of the year. Spring is typically warm and pleasant and is the parks busiest season. Try to avoid mid-march (spring break) unless you have reservations for accommodations. Summers are hot; although temperatures vary greatly between the desert floor, often above 100 degrees Fahrenheit, and the Chisos Mountains, ten to twenty degrees cooler. June-August are the hottest months. Visitors should be familiar with heat safety. The rainy season extends May through September with local heavy thunderstorms and some flash flooding. However, the water recedes rapidly and the rainy season can be a delightful time to visit since afternoon and evening rains often cool the desert. Fall quickly melds into winter which is pleasantly mild and usually sunny, although periods of cloudy weather and freezing cold do occur. Snow is rare and generally light. Winter visitors must prepare for a variety of conditions. The holidays (Thanksgiving and Christmas breaks) are typically busy so make reservations for accommodations.

Elevation is Everything

Air temperature changes by five degrees for every 1,000 feet of elevation you gain or lose; temperatures in the high Chisos Mountains can be 20+ degrees cooler than temperatures along the Rio Grande. Prepare for this kind of variation during your trip.

Dress for the Weather

Year-round, a wide-brimmed hat, comfortable clothing, and sturdy walking shoes or boots are necessary for anyone planning to get outdoors. Sunscreen is always a must and hikers must always carry plenty of water; one gallon per person per day is recommended. Summer visitors should be aware of heat safety; like wearing clothing that protects from the sun and avoiding activity midday. Winter visitors should be prepared for anything; temperatures vary from below freezing to above 80 degrees Fahrenheit.

Average Temperatures and Precipitation

The table below is based on average temperatures and precipitation at Park Headquarters in Panther Junction. At the higher mountain elevations temperatures average 5–10 degrees cooler during the day and 0-5 degrees cooler at night. The mountains also receive more precipitation. The lower desert and river corridor average 5–10 degrees warmer during the day and is 0-5 degrees warmer at night (except winter when its 0-7 degrees cooler) and receives less precipitation.

Month	Average Max Temp (°F)	Average Min Temp (°F)	Monthly Precip. Average (inches)	Cumulative Precip. Average (inches)
January	60.9	37.3	.92	.92
February	67.1	40.9	.30	1.22
March	75.0	47.7	.43	1.65
April	83.7	55.6	.47	2.12
May	89.5	63.4	1.29	3.41
June	95.4	70.1	1.49	4.90
July	92.0	70.3	2.13	7.03
August	92.7	70.8	1.96	8.99
September	86.1	64.7	1.58	10.57
October	81.5	56.9	.69	11.26
November	70.3	45.9	.88	12.14
December	63.3	39.0	.29	12.43

Plan Your Visit

Once a remote and seemingly inhospitable area reached only by miles of dirt roads, Big Bend has become one of the most popular vacation destinations in the state of Texas visited by an average of 300,000 visitors each year. Scenic vistas, diverse wildlife, historic sites, and border culture rank among the features visitors enjoy in Big Bend.



Morning light along the drive to Rio Grande Village
NPS Photo/Cookie Ballou

Visitor Centers

Be Sure to Stop at the Panther Junction Visitor Center

For information, orientation, exhibits, park video, maps, books, and free brochures, the Panther Junction Visitor Center is a great place to start your adventure.

Panther Junction Visitor Center

Open all year, 9:00am-5:00pm. Reduced hours on Christmas day.



Panther Junction Visitor Center
NPS Photo/Cookie Ballou

Located at park headquarters, Panther Junction Visitor Center is the best place to begin your visit. Backcountry and river use permits are issued during normal business hours, and entrance fees can be paid at the visitor center. Interactive exhibits provide an overview of geology and natural and cultural histories of the park. The visitor center also has a theater, with a park orientation movie shown upon request.

The visitor center complex includes a Big Bend Natural History Association bookstore, U.S. Post Office, and restrooms. A water faucet is available for filling personal water containers. The Panther Path, a self-guided nature trail, begins adjacent to the porch of the visitor center.

The Panther Junction Service Station, 200 yards west of the visitor center, is open every day. The station offers gas, diesel, as well as groceries.

Chisos Basin Visitor Center

Open all year, 8:30am-4:00pm. Closed for lunch. Reduced hours on Christmas day.

The Chisos Basin Visitor Center is located in the Basin developed area, adjacent to the parking lot. Chisos Mountains trailhead is 100 yards to the west of the visitor center. The Basin Visitor Center includes interactive exhibits on plants, animals, and birds found in the Chisos Mountains. Backcountry and river use permits are issued during normal business hours, and entrance fees can be paid at the visitor center. A Big Bend Natural History Association bookstore and restrooms are located at the visitor center. A water faucet is available on the east side of the building for filling personal water containers.

Castolon Visitor Center

Open seasonally, November through April 10:00am-4:00pm. Closed for lunch.

Located in the historic La Harmonia store building, Castolon Visitor Center has exhibits on the multi-faceted history of this border region. Backcountry and river use permits are issued during normal business hours, and entrance fees can be paid at the Castolon Visitor Center. The Castolon Visitor Center has a Big Bend Natural History Association bookstore and nearby restrooms.

Persimmon Gap Visitor Center

Open seasonally, November through April, 9:30am-4:00pm. Closed for lunch.

Located at the north entrance to the park, Persimmon Gap Visitor Center offers park orientation and information. The visitor center has exhibits, bookstore, mini-theater, and restrooms. Backcountry and river use permits are issued during normal business hours. and entrance fees can be paid at the Persimmon Gap Visitor Center.

Rio Grande Village Visitor Center

Open seasonally, November through April, 8:30am-4:00pm. Closed for lunch.

Rio Grande Village Visitor Center is located 0.25 miles north of the Rio Grande Village developed area. Exhibits explore bats and other animals that live in Big Bend. Backcountry and river use permits are issued during normal business hours. Entrance fees can be paid at the Rio Grande Village Visitor Center. Out front, a small desert garden provides an overview of Chihuahuan Desert plants. Rio Grande Village Visitor Center includes a small theater, a Big Bend Natural History Association bookstore, and restrooms. A water faucet is available for filling personal water containers.

Local Outfitters

Local outfitters offer a variety of services including shuttles, equipment rentals, guided trips and scenic flights.



NPS Photo/Big Bend National Park

Shuttle Service, Equipment Rental, and Guided Trips

The businesses listed below provide a wide variety of services, including shuttles, equipment rental, and guided trips. Please contact these businesses individually for more information:

- **Angell Expeditions** 432-299-3713 or 305-336-2787
- **Big Bend River Tours** 800-545-4240
- **Big Bend Expeditions** 888-408-2945
- **Big Bend Overland Tours** 800-848-2363
- **Desert Sports** 888-989-6900
- **Far Flung Outdoor Center** 800-839-7238

Scenic Flights

- **Rio Aviation, Inc.** 1-432-557-9477

Directions & Transportation



Highway routes to and from Big Bend National Park. While the isolation of Big Bend National Park is a draw for many visitors, it also means your trip must be well prepared and carefully planned. Big Bend National Park is located in southwest Texas, a considerable distance from cities and transportation hubs. There is no public transportation to, or in Big Bend National Park.

Area map of Big Bend and vicinity.

Several highways lead to Big Bend National Park: TX 118 from Alpine to Study Butte or FM 170 from Presidio to Study Butte (then 26 miles east to park headquarters) or US 90 or US 385 to Marathon (then 70 miles south to park headquarters).



Distances between towns and services are considerable. Be sure you have plenty of gas, oil, food, and water for your trip. The park has four camp stores, but supply and selection can be limited. There are also small stores in the communities outside the park. The last major shopping areas (grocery and hardware stores) are Alpine, Fort Stockton, and Del Rio.

Public Transportation

There is no public transportation in the immediate vicinity of the park. A variety of transportation methods can get you to cities within a day's drive of the park.

Airports

The nearest airports served by major airlines are located in Midland/Odessa, Texas (235 miles from park headquarters) and El Paso, Texas (330 miles from park headquarters). Rental cars are available at both airports.

Rail Service

The nearest Amtrak station is located in Alpine, Texas (100 miles from park headquarters). Call Amtrak at 1-800-USA-RAIL for schedule information.

Bus Service

Greyhound provides daily service to Alpine, Texas (100 miles from park headquarters). Call Greyhound at 1-800-231-2222 for schedule information.

Eating



Restaurants

The Mountain View Restaurant, located in the Chiso Mountain Lodge, provides the only full-service dining inside the park. The restaurant has a grand vista of the basin and surrounding peaks and is open daily for breakfast, lunch, and dinner.

Study Butte.

Many dining opportunities exist outside the park in the communities of Terlingua and

Goods and Services

There are three camp stores, two gas stations, and a post office located in Big Bend National Park.



Chisos Basin Store

NPS Photo/Cookie Ballou

Commercial services in Big Bend National Park are operated by **Forever Resorts, Inc.**, under contract with the National Park Service. This concession operator runs the Chisos Mountains Lodge, in addition to camper stores at Rio Grande Village, Castolon, Panther Junction and the Chisos Basin.

Convenience Stores, ATMs, and WiFi

- Convenience Stores—open year-round at Rio Grande Village, the Chisos Basin, and at Castolon. Each location carries basic camping supplies, groceries, and souvenirs. The Panther Junction Service Station also has limited groceries and souvenirs.
- ATMs—available at the Chisos Basin store, the Rio Grande Village store, and the Panther Junction Service Station.
- WiFi—available at the Chisos Mountain Lodge and the Rio Grande Village Store. There are no public-use computer terminals in the park.

Gas/Service Stations

In the Park

- Panther Junction Service Station—located west of the Panther Junction Visitor Center, has gas, diesel, and groceries.
- Rio Grande Village Service Station—located at the RGV store, has gas, diesel, and propane.

Outside the Park

- Study Butte—Big Bend Resorts and Adventures: 432-371-2483 (gas and diesel)
- Lajitas—Lajitas General Store: 432-424-5040 (gas)
- Terlingua—Terlingua Auto Service: 432-371-2223 (auto repair and towing)
- FM 2627(north of the park)—Stillwell Store: 432-376-2244 (gas)

Postal Services

- Panther Junction Post Office is open year-round; Monday–Friday: 8:00am–3:00pm; closed for lunch. Phone: 432-477-2238. A mail drop and stamps are also available at the Chisos Basin Store.
- The postal zip code for Big Bend National Park is 79834.
- Postcards and letters can be hand-cancelled with a Big Bend postmark, bring them to the post office during regular hours.
- If you plan on an extended stay in the park, it is possible to receive mail sent via general delivery to the post office (advance arrangements strongly suggested).
- Due to homeland security restrictions, the National Park Service cannot accept UPS or FedEx packages addressed to visitors.

Places To Go

Consider including a visit to one or more of these special locations along with your other planned activities. Stop in at any of the park's visitor centers to obtain all the information necessary for a safe and enjoyable experience.



Vista from Dorgan House ruins
NPS/Jennette Jurado

Castolon Historic District

The west side of the park offers stunning desert views and opportunities to explore the history of the region. The **Castolon Historic District** provides a glimpse into Big Bend's complex past through exhibits and historic adobe buildings.

The Castolon Historic District has a visitor center (open seasonally), and the historic La Harmonia Store (in the same building) offers a full range of supplies, and is open year-round. Cottonwood campground, located nearby, provides a quiet, riverside camping experience. Picnic tables are located at La Harmonia Store, Cottonwood Campground, and the Santa Elena Trailhead.



Historic Boiler on Display at Castolon
NPS Photo/Cookie Ballou



Historic 1938 Postmark, Castolon, TX

For most people, the Castolon area is a place to stop on the way to the spectacular Santa Elena Canyon. But for those who take the time, it can be a great place to explore the human history of Big Bend. Castolon is certainly not the only area in the park that is historically significant, but it is perhaps the most intact. A trip to Castolon is, in many ways, a journey back in time, albeit to a time not too long ago. Castolon's history is really not that "old" farming and ranching continued in the area until 1961. The Castolon Historic District is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

History of the Castolon Area



Alvino House
NPS Photo/Maria Lavender

In the early 1900s, people began to live and farm along the banks of the Rio Grande, downstream from Santa Elena Canyon. The fields were fertile and the community grew. Farmers in the area raised corn, beans, wheat, squash, tomatoes, and melons. In 1901, Cipriano Hernandez started the first store in the area and sold goods to his neighbors and to the mining community in Terlingua. He operated the store out of his home, which is today known as the Alvino House (named for Alvino Ybarra who lived there with his family from 1918 to 1957).

From about 1912 to 1920, revolution raged in Mexico. Many Mexican families moved north of the river to avoid the bloodshed and bandit raids. The raids, including the Glenn Springs raid in 1916, brought the U.S. military to defend the border. The National Guard established camps at **Glenn Springs**, La Noria (northeast of Rio Grande Village), Lajitas (west of the park), and Castolon (Camp Santa Helena). In response to a later revolution (the Escobar Rebellion of 1929), the Air Corps established a landing field at nearby **Johnson's Ranch**.

Camp Santa Helena, established in 1916, utilized troops from the 5th, 6th, and 8th cavalries. The men lived in tents and the construction of a permanent post began in 1919. By the time the buildings were completed in 1920, the Revolution was over, and the men were ordered to roll up their tents and take new assignments elsewhere. The new buildings were most likely never occupied by the soldiers. They included an enlisted men's' barrack, officers' and non-commissioned officers' quarters, a latrine, a granary and tack shed, and a stable (which burned sometime before 1933).

In 1921, the **La Harmonia Company Store** moved into the new barracks building and began its eighty-year history of serving as a frontier trading post (from 1918 to 1921, the store was located in "Old Castolon" across from what is today Cottonwood Campground). The La Harmonia Company was also involved in farming and ranching. In the early 1920s, La Harmonia began farming cotton, a not-so-prosperous endeavor that continued for two decades. In 1961, the National Park Service acquired the La Harmonia Company holdings and began operating the store as a concession operation.

In addition to the store, Castolon includes the oldest known adobe structure in Big Bend National Park (the Alvino House), another store building (Old Castolon), and numerous adobe ruins that were once homes for the many Mexican American and Anglo families that lived in the area. There are two cemeteries in the Castolon area.

La Harmonia Store

Historically, the trading post in a remote frontier had to be all things to all people. So it was in the southern Big Bend with the Castolon store. From 1902 until the establishment of the park in 1944, it served, though not always by virtue of legal designation, as consulate, sheriffs' department, notary public, bank, and a source of medical, hardware, and ranch supplies in northern Mexico and the southern Big Bend.

A ninety-year history of practical diplomacy in an isolated and often troubled border region is hardly what one expects from the local convenience mart. And while the original founder of the store never planned it that way, later owners recognized the role the store could play in area practices and politics.

In 1901, Cipriano Hernandez had the idea of farming the fertile floodplain around Castolon and selling his produce to the miners in Terlingua, just up the creek. The east end of the rambling adobe building now known as the "Alvino House" was the original Castolon store, where Hernandez vended his melons, pumpkins, squash, and beans. In 1914, he sold the property to Clyde Buttrill, who hired James Sublett to manage the farm and store. Sublett and his family moved into the house, and later moved the store into larger building located across from Cottonwood Campground at Old Castolon. Several subsequent managers ran the store in this location until the spring of 1919. In 1918, Howard Perry, owner of the Chisos Mining Company in Terlingua, decided to get into the farming and ranching business as well. He formed a partnership with Wayne Cartledge and founded La Harmonia Company, which bought the Castolon Store in 1919. Cartledge, with his son Eugene, managed it.



Historic Remnant at La Harmonia Store
NPS Photo/Cookie Ballou

Cartledge picked the name fully aware that life was not always harmonious. Border troubles enlivened the years 1910-1920. To protect the citizenry and the mines, the U.S. Government sent cavalry and Texas sent rangers to Castolon. La Harmonia Company became a stabilizing influence largely due to the efforts of Wayne Cartledge.

Northern Mexico at that time represented an extreme in isolation. La Harmonia Company was the most accessible wholesaler for many small Mexican stores in the region. Cartledge used his connections with the Chisos Mining Company to secure low prices through bulk orders. He was also a middleman between suppliers from interior Mexico and buyers as far away as New York in the candelilla and fur trades. La Harmonia Company kept money and valuables for local clients, detained criminals, resolved financial tangles, and obtained the postal contract in 1922, shortly after moving into the newly completed but never occupied Army barracks in Castolon. When the county sheriffs had business across the river, Cartledge would use his influence to enlist Mexican cooperation. Local residents and business people found the store--and its keeper--to be a valuable asset to the community.

The Castolon store changed management and got its fourth storekeeper in 1961, when Cartledge sold his property to the National Park Service for inclusion in Big Bend National Park. National Park Concessions, Inc., took over from the Cartledges and began running the store as a park concessioner. Today, park concessioner Forever Resorts, Inc. manages the Castolon Store year-round for visitors.

In the past thirty years, a few changes have taken place. The ice box was converted to electric. A microwave oven now reorganizes the molecular structure of sandwiches on the counter. Candelilla wax and furs have given way to snacks and tourist information as major commodities at the store, and the area is now sought after for rare bird sightings rather than farmland. Although still isolated by most American standards, telephones and paved roads now link Castolon to the outside world. Still, much remains the same.

Ross Maxwell Scenic Drive

The **Ross Maxwell Scenic Drive** anchors this part of the park and provides access to numerous hikes and scenic overlooks. At the end of the paved road is Santa Elena Canyon, one of the most famous landmarks of Big Bend; a short trail leads into the canyon.

The thirty-mile Ross Maxwell Scenic Drive leads to the Castolon Historic District and Santa Elena Canyon. Along the way the road showcases some of the historic and geologic features this region is famous for.



Sam Nail Ranch
NPS Photo/Cookie Ballou

The Sam Nail Ranch

One of the many homesteads once active in the Big Bend, the remnants of Sam Nail Ranch now provide shade and habitat for desert wildlife. A windmill still pumps water and attracts an interesting variety of birdlife. Sit quietly on the bench and listen for javelinas moving through the brush, or enjoy watching painted buntings, green-tailed towhees, and mockingbirds.



Homer Wilson Ranch
NPS Photo/Cookie Ballou

Blue Creek Ranch Overlook

This overlooks provides a view of the headquarters of the Homer Wilson Ranch, one of the largest in the region prior to the establishment of the park. A short trail leads down the ranch buildings and connects with the Blue Creek Canyon and Dodson trails.



Sotol Vista
NPS Photo/Jennette Jurado

Sotol Vista Overlook

From the viewpoint perched high above the desert floor you are rewarded an unparalleled vista of the entire western side of Big Bend National Park, including magnificent Santa Elena Canyon in the distance.



Lower Burro Mesa Pouroff
NPS Photo/Cookie Ballou

Lower Burro Mesa Pouroff

Take the 1.5-mile side road to the base of the colorful cliffs of Burro Mesa. A 0.5-mile trail leads into a hidden box canyon with a high, dry waterfall. A variety of desert plants and superb geology surround you at this worthwhile roadside stop.



Mule Ears Peaks
NPS Photo/Blake Trester

Mule Ears Viewpoint

A beautiful viewpoint along the Ross Maxwell Scenic Drive. From the parking area, the Mule Ears Peaks dominate the view. A 2-mile long trail leads to a delightful desert spring.



Tuff Canyon
NPS Photo/Reine Wonite

Tuff Canyon

Tuff Canyon was carved out of soft volcanic tuff (compressed ash). The deep and narrow canyon is easily observed from two viewing platforms. If you wish, you may enter and hike through the gorge.



Castolon Historic District
NPS Photo/Reine Wonite

Castolon Historic District

Established as a cavalry camp in the early Twentieth Century, Castolon later served as the headquarters of the La Harmonia Company. A visitor center and camper store are located here. The Cottonwood campground is located nearby.



Santa Elena Canyon

The Rio Grande has sliced a 1,500-foot vertical chasm out of pure limestone to form one of the most magnificent canyons in the park. As you look down Santa Elena Canyon, the left wall of the canyon is in Mexico, while the right wall is in Texas. A fabulous trail follows the river upstream then drops down to the canyon floor. Taking a float trip through the canyon is also an enjoyable venture.

Santa Elena Canyon
NPS Photo/Big Bend National Park



Old Maverick Road

The Old Maverick Road runs between Maverick Junction and Santa Elena Canyon. It is a 14-mile improved dirt road that passes along the Terlingua Creek badlands on the west side of the park. A number of historic sites are located along the road.

View along Old Maverick Road
NPS Photo/Reine Wonite

Chisos Basin

Ringed by massive cliffs and superlative views, the Chisos Basin is Big Bend's year-round focal point. Located at 5,400 feet, mild temperatures make the Basin a pleasant place to visit in the summer heat. Numerous trails begin in the basin, and range from short walks to longer backcountry hikes. The paved, 0.3-mile Window View Trail provides an excellent place to view the mountain peaks or watch an evening sunset.



There are a number of services in the Basin including the lodge, restaurant, and camper store. A 60-site campground is located in the lower portion of the developed area. Evening programs are often held in the outdoor amphitheater located adjacent to the campground. Stop in at the Chisos Basin Visitor Center for more information on what to see and do.

Carmen white-tailed deer
NPS/Cookie Ballou

Persimmon Gap

As the northern gateway to the park, many visitors pass by Persimmon Gap as they enter Big Bend. A visitor center and picnic area are located at the gap.

Along the road from Panther Junction to Persimmon Gap are a number of roadside exhibits, including the Fossil Bone Exhibit area. The 14-mile Dagger Flat Auto Trail provides a scenic exploration of the desert environment, ending in a forest of Giant Dagger Yuccas; this dirt road requires 4-wheel drive.

Day hikes in this part of the park include the routes to Dog Canyon and Devil's Den, as well as a primitive trail up Persimmon Gap Draw towards Persimmon Peak.



View along Dagger Flat Road
NPS/Cookie Ballou

Rio Grande Village

Rio Grande Village is the center of visitor activity during the winter months. Great scenery, warm temperatures, abundant wildlife, and full visitor services make this a must-see location for any Big Bend outing. Rio Grande Village has an NPS campground and visitor center, and a concession-operated camper store, laundry, and shower facility. The store also runs the Rio Grande Village RV Campground, the only campground with full hook-ups.



Beaver Pond
NPS/Cookie Ballou

Rio Grande Village Nature Trail

The RGV Nature Trail is scenic and offers fantastic opportunities for wildlife viewing, especially birds. A self-guiding leaflet describes the area's natural and human history. Pick up the trailhead behind RGV campground site #18.

Daniel's Ranch Picnic Area

The Daniels' Ranch picnic area, located on the west side of Rio Grande Village, is another excellent birding spot. The trailhead for the Hot Springs Canyon trail is nearby.

Hot Springs Historic District

Take a soak in the hot springs and explore the remains of Big Bend's first resort.

Soak in the Hot Spring



Hot Spring
NPS Photo/Matthew Yarbrough

J.O. Langford's impressive bathhouse is long gone; today the spring is contained by the foundation remains of the bathhouse, on the north bank of the Rio Grande. Relish a primitive bathing experience while enjoying unparalleled scenery.

Hot Springs Road

The two-mile gravel road descends down a rough, narrow wash to the Hot Springs Historic District and trailhead area. **Note:** *Motor homes and oversize vehicles are prohibited on the one-way sections of the Hot Springs road.*

Hiking to the Hot Spring

From the trailhead, the hot spring is a 0.5-mile round trip. A one-mile loop trail continues from the hot spring around on the bluff above the Rio Grande, returning to the trailhead area. The hot spring is not accessible by car.

The Hot Spring

Hot spring water is considered old water, fossil water, ancient and irreplaceable. Heated by geothermal processes and emerging at 105° F., the water carries dissolved mineral salts reputed to have healing powers. The therapeutic value of heat has long been touted as a remedy of both body and soul. Be aware that some hot springs can burn you either with the scalding effects of heat or the caustic nature of the water chemistry. Use caution when bathing and limit the exposure of children to the warm waters.

When the Rio Grande floods, muddy water flows over the spring, often submerging it. Once the flood has receded, the spring may be covered in rocks, mud or debris. This will require some digging to form a suitable space for bathing.

The Rules

- Be respectful of others; soak only, and use no soaps or oils.
- Swimming is not recommended; be aware that adjacent river currents and depths can be unpredictable.
- Please help to keep the area clean by picking up trash.
- Alcoholic beverages and glass containers are prohibited.
- Overnight camping in the area of the Hot Springs is prohibited.
- It is illegal to purchase items from vendors operating on the Mexican side of the Rio Grande

Boquillas Canyon

No visit to the east side of the park is complete without a stop at Boquillas Canyon. An overlook and trail provide opportunities to view or explore the canyon.

Things To Do

With over 100 miles of paved roads, 150 miles of dirt roads, and about 200 miles of hiking trails the park offers nearly limitless opportunities for scenic driving, hiking, camping, backpacking, mountain biking, horseback riding, bird watching, wildlife observation, and stargazing. Additionally, the Rio Grande borders the park for 118 miles providing options for half-day floats to extended excursion by raft, canoe, or kayak.



Backcountry Use

Vast undeveloped areas in Big Bend National Park provide excellent opportunities for backpacking, river trips, horseback riding, and mountain biking.

Types of Backcountry Use

Backpacking

Primitive campsites along the Chisos Mountains Trails provide some of the ultimate Big Bend vistas.



Backpacking in the Chisos Mountains
NPS Photo/Cookie Ballou

Chisos Mountains Backcountry Campsites

Backpackers in the Chisos Mountains can choose from forty-two designated campsites. Use this workbook to see photos and locations of the backcountry campsites.

Outer Mountain Loop, Mesa de Anguila, and Marufo Vega Trail

The most remote areas of Big Bend National Park are best left to experienced backpackers. Each year, park rangers respond to desert emergencies when hikers are not prepared for the heat and extreme conditions of the desert.

Due to the complex topography and vague trails, detailed 7.5 minute topographical maps and a compass are necessary for most hikes.

- **Outer Mountain Loop**



Red Rocks in Blue Creek
NPS Photo/Reine Wonite

Difficulty: Strenuous; significant elevation changes and primitive trail

Distance: 30 miles (side-trips to the South Rim or Emory peak add up to five additional miles).

Time: Allow at least three days

The "*Outer Mountain Loop*" refers to the 30-mile circuit that combines the Pinnacles, Juniper Canyon, Dodson, Blue Creek, and Laguna Meadows trails. Although you can start/end this trip in the Chisos Basin, Juniper

Canyon, or the Homer Wilson Ranch, most hikers begin from the Basin and hike the trail in a clockwise direction. Sections of this trail are extremely steep; there is limited flat or level hiking. The loop is Big Bend's signature multi-day backpacking trip and includes a wide variety of habitats and scenery including, the piñon/juniper/oak woodlands of the Chisos, and stark, rugged desert in one of the most wild and remote corners of the United States.

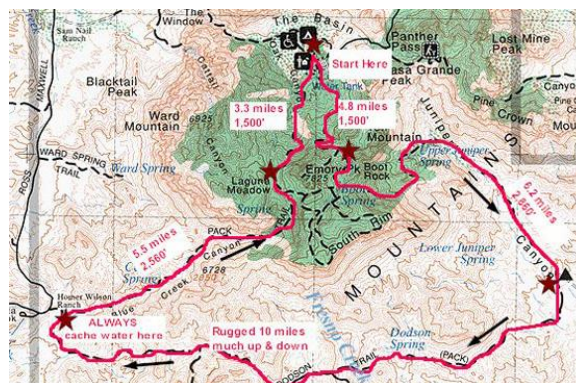
Safety Concerns

- Each year, park rangers are called to respond to medical emergencies along this route. Most are the result of severe dehydration and heat-related conditions.
- **Backcountry permits** are required for all overnight backpacking in Big Bend National Park.
- Cell phone service is limited in the park. Always have a friend who knows your itinerary and can call the park if you are overdue.
- Please, do not attempt this hike during the summer months. From early May through early October, it may be physically impossible to carry enough water to safely hike this trail.

Water

Water is always a concern on this trail. Do not rely on seasonal, intermittent, or ephemeral springs. We recommend that you carry a minimum of one gallon of water per person per day. Caching water at one or two locations along the loop, in addition to packing all you can carry before setting out on your hike, is the key to success on the Outer Mountain Loop. Water can be cached at the end of the Juniper Canyon Road (requires high clearance or 4WD) or at the Homer Wilson/Blue Creek Ranch. A storage box is available there for caching water. When caching water, remember to mark each bottle with your name and the date you plan to pick up the water. Please pack out empty bottles. Only water can be stored in the storage boxes. Food and supplies left in the boxes are subject to removal.

Outer Mountain Loop Route



- **Mesa de Anguila**



The Rio Grande, as seen from the Mesa de Anguila.
Trevor Gureckis

Remote, and isolated from the rest of Big Bend National Park, Mesa de Anguila offers an opportunity for solitude in an area with exceptional views.

The trails may not be obvious as animal trails diverge from the main trail, and sections of trail may be overgrown with grass and shrubs. The trek is recommended for experienced desert backpackers only.

Due to the difficult nature of this hike and environmental dangers of the low desert, hikers are strongly advised to purchase a detailed topographic map of this trail from the park bookstore before heading out.

- **Marufo Vega Trail**



Marufo Vega Trail
NPS Photo/Ann Wildermuth

This is a strenuous, but spectacular day hike or overnight backpacking trip. The trail is named after Gregorio Marufo, who grazed goats along the river. Hikers today use the cross country section to join two ends of the popular desert trail making it a 14-mile round-trip loop.

The route is poorly defined and overgrown with low desert vegetation. Temperatures may exceed 100°F. There is no shade or water along this trail—river water is not potable. This combination of factors makes this trail potentially deadly during the late spring and summer. Wear a hat, and clothing to protect against the sun's radiant heat, take along plenty of water and salty snacks, and start early when temperatures are cooler.

Due to the difficult nature of this hike and environmental dangers in the low desert, hikers are strongly advised to purchase a detailed topographic map before heading out as the trail can be confusing. A map is available from the Big Bend Natural History Association bookstore.

Backcountry Use Permits

A Backcountry Use Permit is required for all overnight backpacking trips.

Backpacking for Organized Groups

An organized group or individual party may not exceed a 15-person limit. There are currently only two Chisos campsites that can accommodate a group this size: it may be necessary to split the group to other campsites. As permits are issued only on a first

come, first-served basis, it is best to plan ahead, and have alternative itineraries in mind, especially during peak visitation periods.



Autumn on the Emory Peak Trail
NPS Photo/Cookie Ballou

For Your Safety

Knowledge and preparation can increase your comfort level and reduce your chances of injury. Remember, you are ultimately responsible for your own safety.

- Pick up the park brochure which includes a detailed map of the park. In addition, it is recommended that you carry a topographical map and a compass, and know how to use them. Many trails, especially those in the desert areas of the park, are poorly-defined and can be difficult to follow.
- Designate a trip leader and follow the schedule on your backcountry permit. Always let someone know where you are going and when you plan to return.
- Give yourself enough time to reach your destination well before dark, and always have a flashlight and other light source in case of emergency.
- Camp 100 yards from dry washes or stream beds. Flash floods may occur without warning, even if you do not see rain.
- Do not attempt cross-country travel without an experienced leader.
- Technical climbing is dangerous. Most rock in the park is unstable.

Rock Climbing Regulations

Definition

Technical rock climbing is defined as any activity involving the use of rope to ascend or descend rock.

General Information

Sturdy rock lending itself to safe rock climbing is very limited in the park. The great majority of the park's exposed vertical rock is composed of unstable igneous rock and sharp fluted limestone.

Regulations

- The use of portable electric drills is prohibited.
- The use of hand operated drills is allowed only with the written approval of the Superintendent.

- Climbing, ascending, descending, or traversing an archeological or cultural resource is prohibited.
- Technical rock climbing on rock faces within 0.25 mile of known peregrine eyries, as posted, will not be allowed between February 1–May 31.
- The rock faces of Casa Grande peak are closed to climbing.
- All trash, including toilet paper, must be packed out.
- Because colored chalk can permanently stain rock, only white chalk without oil-based additives may be used.
- All webbing must be removed upon conclusion of climbing activities.

Water

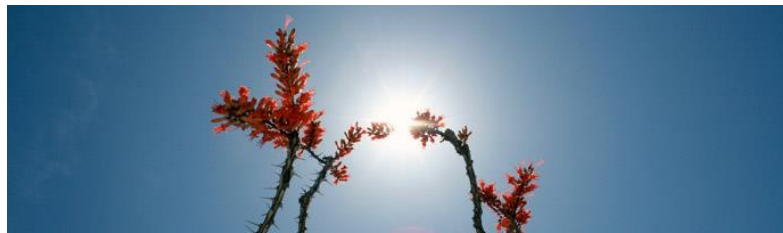
There are no reliable water sources in the backcountry. To insure you have enough water for drinking and cooking, please carry one gallon per person per day (water weighs approximately 8 lbs. per gallon). Water faucets are located at every visitor center. Carry additional water for your vehicle.

Equipment Considerations

- Bring a backpacking stove if you plan to cook; ground fires or wood fires are not permitted anywhere in the park.
- Consider bringing a sturdy, lightweight tent for protection against the weather elements, particularly wind and precipitation.
- Sturdy hiking boots are highly recommended; trails are steep, rugged, and rocky.
- Be aware of the current weather forecast and bring/wear appropriate clothing. To protect yourself from glaring desert sun (year-round) bring a hat, sunglasses, and sunscreen.
- Carry a first aid kit that includes tweezers for cactus spines, Band-Aids and adhesive pads for blisters, compresses for severe cuts, and a triangle bandage which can be put to many uses.
- Carry a good, dependable flashlight.

Survive Sun

Too much sun can be dangerous; take heat safety seriously.



NPS Photo/Jennette Jurado

In all seasons, whether walking, backpacking, or day hiking, follow these tips to conserve your internal water reserves:

Reduce Your Activity

During the hottest days, usually May through August, avoid hiking in the lower elevations during the heat of the day, generally 10:00am to 6:00pm.

Find Shade

Shade in the desert means the difference between excessive heat gain from radiant sun and sheer comfort. In an emergency, a person resting in the shade will survive longer than someone exposed to the sun.

Drink Your Water

Don't try to conserve the drinking water you have. Whether casually strolling, or taking a strenuous hike, you must drink your available water. Carry plenty of drinking water; at least one gallon per person per day. Balance your food and water intake. Eat a salty snack every time you take a drink of water.

Reduce Alcohol and Caffeine Intake

Water is the best remedy for dehydration and listlessness. The diuretic effects of caffeine and alcohol can result in an accelerated loss of body water.

Protect Your Body

Our sensitive skin burns easily; it needs shade, sunscreen, sunglasses, a wide-brimmed hat, and proper footwear. Dehydration is accelerated by exposed skin, so keep your clothing on. Wear long-sleeved, loose-fitting, light-colored clothes.

Be Alert for Poisonous Snakes and Insects

Watch where you place your hands and feet, carry a flashlight at night, and shake out your shoes and clothes before putting them on. Remember, snakes and insects are protected in the park. Please do not harm or harass them.

Wildlife Encounters

Mountain lions and black bears are a natural part of the environment; be prepared for the possibility of an encounter. Keep small children close at all times. Don't let them run ahead on trails. If you feel threatened by a lion or bear, *do not run*. Instead, look large and yell, scream, wave your arms, and throw rocks or sticks if necessary. Pick up small children. Report lion and bear sightings in detail to a ranger.

Secure Your Food

Do not feed any wildlife. Keep your food in a hard-sided vehicle or food storage locker. Ice chests are not animal-proof.

Backcountry Food Storage

Backcountry Food Storage Lockers
NPS Photo\Cookie Ballou

Black bears, javelinas, skunks, rodents and other animals may explore your campsite looking for food scraps. Do your part to properly store food, water, and edible items from animals whether backpacking in the Chisos Mountains or camping at a primitive roadside campsite.

Water Storage

The Homer Wilson storage boxes are for WATER STORAGE ONLY. Water must be marked with a name and a predicted date out. Food left in the boxes is subject to removal.

Food Storage

All food, water, food products, food trash, unclean cooking utensils and other aromatic items must be stored in a hard-sided vehicle, or provided bear resistant storage locker—unless items are closely attended and within arms-reach.

The caching of food and water is prohibited unless items are stored within a bear resistant storage container that has been certified and approved by the Sierra Interagency Black Bear Group (SIBBG) or the Interagency Grizzly Bear Committee (IGBC).

Keep a Clean Camp

Cook away from your sleeping area. Dispose of cooking water in camper sinks in the Chisos Basin campground or well away from camp in the backcountry. Strain water to insure food scraps aren't dumped on the ground.

Break Down Your Tent When Not In Use

Wildlife can be curious or attracted by food smells and may explore your tent. Consider leaving backpacks open at night, too.

Pack Out All Trash, Including Food Scraps and Grease

Don't leave food or trash in the storage locker.

Report Any Illegal Activity to a Ranger

When visiting Big Bend, the possibility of encountering narcotics smugglers and human traffickers does exist. If you see such activity, please report the details to a park ranger as soon as possible.

Lock Your Vehicle and Safeguard Your Valuables

Theft of property from unoccupied vehicles and campsites can be a problem in remote areas of the park.

Avoid Swimming or Wading in the Rio Grande

Sudden drop-offs and unpredictable currents make the river potentially hazardous.

Backcountry Preparation and Safety

Knowledge and preparation can increase your comfort level and reduce your chances of injury.

Backcountry Regulations

You are responsible for protecting the resources of the park; these regulations are enforced.



Backpackers in the Chisos
NPS Photo/Big Bend National Park

Backcountry Regulations

Use or discharge of firearms is prohibited. All wildlife is protected by federal law.
Possession of other weapons, traps, or explosives is prohibited.

Ground fires and wood fires are prohibited.

High Chisos and Zone Camping—use containerized fuel stoves only.

Backcountry Roadside Campsites—use pressed charcoal briquettes within a BBQ grill.
Pack out all evidence of cold charcoal ash.

Food Storage

All food, water, food products, food trash, unclean cooking utensils and other aromatic items must be stored in a hard-sided vehicle, or provided bear resistant storage locker – unless items are closely attended and within arms-reach.

The caching of food and water is prohibited unless items are stored within a bear resistant storage container that has been certified and approved by the Sierra Interagency Black Bear Group (SIBBG) or the Interagency Grizzly Bear Committee (IGBC).

Contain your trash and pack it out.

Animals are attracted to trash. Use bear proof storage boxes when you are away from your site and pack out all trash when you break camp, including cigarette butts and toilet paper.

No pets on trails or in the backcountry.

Pets may harm or be harmed by wildlife and can attract predators. Pets are not allowed on park trails; pets can go only where vehicles go.

Do not take shortcuts on trails.

Cross-country hiking is allowed, but when on a marked trail, do not take shortcuts.

Collecting or disturbing any natural or historical feature or object is prohibited.

Leave park features intact for others to enjoy.

Contaminating natural water sources and their surroundings is prohibited. Camp at least 100 yards from any water source.

Desert water sources and springs are fragile and vital for the plants and animals that depend on them for survival. Soaps, oils, skin lotions, and food residues from bathing and washing can seriously impact water quality. Minimize your impact to areas surrounding springs, seeps, and other temporal water sources.

Camp within designated sites.

Set up tents only on bare ground, not plants, within the area outlined by rocks, logs or brush.

Generator use is not permitted in backcountry campsites.

Natural quiet is a protected resource; help preserve a quiet wilderness experience.

Open zone camping: Be at least 0.5 mile and out of sight from any road and at least 100 yards from any trail, historical structure, archeological site, dry wash, or cliff edge.

Minimize your impact to the natural landscape.

Bury human waste at least 6 inches deep. Pack out toilet paper.

Human waste is unsightly and unsanitary. Carry a digging trowel. Locate latrines 0.25 mile from any water source and well away from camp.

Motorized vehicles and bicycles are permitted only on designated public roads.

Off-road vehicle travel causes visual and environmental damage.

Do not feed wildlife.

Feeding wildlife is illegal; it often results in rangers having to destroy the animal. Keep food, ice chests and cook gear in a hard-sided vehicle or food storage locker where provided. Don't leave food containers unattended.

Seasonal Closures

The Southeast Rim Trail and a portion of the Northeast Rim Trail from the Boot Canyon/Southeast Rim junction to a point just north of the NE-4 campsite is closed during the peregrine falcon brooding season from February 1 through May 31 each year.

Backcountry Closures

Closure sign near the Boot Canyon Trail junction.
NPS/Big Bend National Park

Closed Areas

Parts of the backcountry are closed to backpacking:

- Within 1/2 mile of any developed area, road, the Mariscal Mine, or Hot Springs.
- Within 100 yards of any trail, historical structure, archaeological site, water source, dry wash or cliff edge.
- Pine Canyon Research Natural Area.
- On Burro Mesa above 3,400 feet elevation.
- The north half of the Chisos Mountains, the Basin, and the area around Oak Spring.
- Within 500 yards of any tinaja on the Mesa de Anguila.

Seasonal Closures

To protect the peregrine falcon, an endangered species, the following areas of the park are closed to all use from February 1 until May 31 each year:

- The Southeast Rim Trail and a portion of the Northeast Rim Trail from the Boot Canyon/Southeast Rim junction to a point just north of Campsite NE-4.
- All Southeast Rim campsites as well as Northeast (NE) campsites 4 and 5 are closed during this period. Technical rock climbing on rock faces within ¼ mile of known peregrine eyries, as posted, will not be allowed between February 1 and May 31.

The park does not plan to close any other areas but restrictions may be modified if Peregrine behavior or nesting sites do not follow traditional trends.

Horseback Riding

Visitors are welcome to bring and use horses in the park.

A **backcountry use permit** is required and must be obtained in person at a park service visitor center up to 24 hours in advance of the trip. Every horse user should obtain a copy of the **stock use regulations**. All livestock must meet state vaccination requirements.

Copies of vaccination documents must be in your possession



Horseback Riding in the Chisos Mountains
NPS Photo/Cookie Ballou

Visitors are welcome to bring and use horses in the park. A **backcountry use permit** is required and must be obtained in person at a park service visitor center up to 24 hours in advance of the trip. Every horse user should obtain a copy of the **stock use regulations**. All livestock must meet state vaccination requirements. Copies of vaccination documents must be in your possession.

There are no horses or pack animals for hire in or near the park; you must bring your own stock. All rides require thorough preparation. Improper equipment, poor conditioning, and disregard for weather conditions can result in an unpleasant or dangerous ride. Respect for the environment you ride through will help protect park resources for you and for future generations.

Where Can You Ride?

While horses are not permitted on paved roads or road shoulders, all gravel roads are open to horses. Cross-country travel is permitted in the park, except in the Chisos Mountains where horse use is limited to the Laguna Meadow, Southwest Rim, and Blue Creek trails. Horses are not permitted in picnic areas, on nature trails, the Santa Elena and Boquillas Canyon Trails, or the Pine Canyon Trail. The Chisos Mountain and Burro Mesa trails are day use only.

Food and Water

Grazing within the park is not permitted; you must bring your own feed. Stock may be watered in the Rio Grande and at springs not used for domestic water supply. Be prepared to haul water for your stock as springs are unreliable, especially during winter months. Check current spring conditions at a visitor center when you arrive. All horse manure and feed remnants must be removed from the park.

River Trips

Rafting, canoeing, and kayaking through the canyons of the Rio Grande can be an unforgettable experience!



River Trip
NPS Photo/Jennette Jurado

Floating the Rio Grande

If you have the time and a spirit of adventure, you may want to consider a river trip. Seeing the park's canyons from the middle of the Rio Grande can be an incredible experience. There are many possibilities including half-day floats or multi-day excursions.

Floating the Rio Grande can take you through miles of canyons up to 1,500 feet deep, where the sunlight may reach the bottom only briefly on winter days. As in other parts of the park, your ears may tell you more than your eyes. Listen for beavers crawling through the brush; you might catch a glimpse as one slides down the riverbank into the water. Turtles, especially red-eared sliders, often sun themselves on rocks and logs just above the waterline. Great blue herons and green kingfishers are just some of the many birds you may see flying along the river.

Along the more open areas of the Rio Grande, you may see local people fishing, farming, and engaging in other traditional activities. These quiet stretches of the river offer expansive views of the colorful buttes, mesas, and mountains in both the U.S. and in Mexico. Far fewer people float the open water between the canyons, so it is possible to go for days without seeing another boater.

International Border

There is often concern about being close to an international border, but incidents between Big Bend visitors and Mexican nationals are exceptionally rare.

The middle of the deepest channel of the Rio Grande is the international boundary. Over the course of your trip, you may cross this boundary several times. Currently, passports are not required. Landing on the Mexican bank of the river is considered an illegal crossing and could result in fines and jail time. However, limited exceptions are made when safety is a consideration: to bail/repack a boat, scout rapids, or seek shade when overheating.

- **Floating Santa Elena Canyon**



Santa Elena Canyon
NPS Photo/Jennette Jurado

Spectacular Santa Elena

Santa Elena Canyon, downstream, is the most popular overnight or three-day trip, not only because the put-in and take-out are easily accessed by car, but because it is often considered the most dramatically beautiful. Santa Elena has the tallest cliffs forming the canyon wall—up to 1,500 feet.

The first 13 meandering miles from the put-in at Lajitas give you a good look at the contrast between the riparian and desert ecosystem. The river becomes more technical in the last seven miles when you have entered the actual canyon. Two miles into the canyon, the largest rapid, the Rock Slide is classified as a Class IV rapid at certain water levels.

Santa Elena Upstream

An enjoyable day trip consists of paddling *upstream*, from the Santa Elena Canyon Trailhead, a few miles into the canyon, and then returning back downstream (also known as a "boomerang" trip). If the water level is low, you do not have to fight the current much going upstream, making this trip quite leisurely. It is an ideal trip if you only have one vehicle, or if you do not want to pay for a shuttle back to your starting point. A backcountry use permit is required for all river trips; no fee is charged for day-use trips.

- **Floating the Rio Grande Wild & Scenic River**
A Wilderness of Stone and Water

It is an irresistible playground where unruly rapids check your skills as a canyon wren's definitive call cascades down ancient limestone cliffs. Below the chasm, the canyon's raw beauty dances across mirrored water. While the primal nature of the river stirs hunger for spirited adventure, the river is also an undulant ribbon of wetland corridor and, against all odds, the lifeblood of the desert.

Planning a Float Trip

Proper preparation is the key to a successful trip on the Rio Grande Wild & Scenic River. Make sure you have the proper equipment, familiarize yourself with river regulations and safety considerations.



Canoeing in Boquillas Canyon
NPS Photo/Jennette Jurado

Choose a Canyon

The canyons of the Rio Grande are the most popular float trips; included in the Wild & Scenic River are:

- **Mariscal Canyon**

Magnificent Mariscal

you need a high clearance vehicle to reach Mariscal Canyon, it is a wonderfully remote day or overnight river trip. It is the shortest canyon in park, 10 miles long, with varied scenery and stunning limestone cliffs rising 1,400 feet. A few Class II-III rapids (depending on water levels) give this excursion some excitement. Check with a ranger about road conditions before embarking on your journey.

Put-In and Take-Out Information

clearance vehicles are usually required to reach both Mariscal Canyon access locations. Count on two to two and a half hours driving time from Panther Junction to Talley. It is a good idea to go to

Solis before you put in at Talley and scout the area to be able to recognize it from the river. It is best to have someone available to drop off your crew and gear at Talley, then meet you at Solis.



Canoeists approaching the
Tight Squeeze
NPS\Big Bend National Park

Put-in: Talley is the put-in for Mariscal Canyon. Be sure to check road conditions before making your plans. The river road is rarely passable to passenger cars and sometimes is so rough as to be passable only to four-wheel-drive vehicles. Be especially careful to avoid getting stuck near the end of the Talley road, where you will encounter loose, drifted sand.

Take-out: Solis is the common take-out for the canyon. Be careful not to overshoot—it's a long way to the next one.

Note: Theft of property left in vehicles is not uncommon at Talley, Solis, or the Santa Elena Canyon take-out. Remove valuables from vehicle and lock all doors. Storage lockers are not available in the park.

- **Boquillas Canyon**
Beautiful Boquillas

For visitors with less experience, a relaxing two to four-day river trip through Boquillas Canyon is a great choice. The rapids in this 33-mile journey only rate Class II. Camping a couple of nights by the soothing sounds of the river, and marveling at the 1,200-foot canyon walls, allow time to forget the daily distractions of life. As you travel down the canyon, notice the remains of candelilla wax mining camps on the Mexican side of the river.



up to

Overlooking Boquillas Canyon
NPS Photo\Big Bend National Park

Put-in and take-out information

The 33-mile, two to three-day trip begins at Rio Grande Village and ends at Heath Canyon (downstream from La Linda).

- Put-in: The usual put-in is at the Rio Grande Village river access, located near the group campsites; an alternative location is at the Daniels' Ranch.
- Take-out: The Heath Canyon take-out is located on the U.S. side of the river, just downstream of the La Linda bridge. Permission to take-out at Heath Canyon should be obtained by calling Heath Canyon Ranch at 432-376-2235.

- **The Lower Canyons.**
Lose yourself in the Lower Canyons

A five to ten-day float trip through the Lower Canyons offers a true wilderness experience. The trip begins at Heath Canyon near La Linda and ends at Dryden Crossing (83 miles). Some river runners continue to Langtry (137 miles). If that is your chosen take-out, be sure to portage the dangerous weir at Foster's Ranch. The Black Gap Wildlife Management Area is a secondary option for put-ins.

The terrain along the Lower Canyons is open desert, rugged hills, and deep canyons. Access to the river is difficult below La Linda and most of the land above the riverbank is privately owned. The rapids in the Lower Canyons are Class II-IV.



miles).

option

View of Tule Canyon and
The Rio Grande from
Burro Bluff
NPS/Big Bend National Park

Put-in and take-out information

Put-in: The Heath Canyon put-in is located on the U.S. side of the river, just downstream of the La Linda bridge. Permission to take-out at Heath Canyon should be obtained by calling Heath Canyon Ranch at 432-376-2235. River access at Black Gap Wildlife Management Area is available at Maravillas, 10 miles downstream from Heath Canyon. There is a \$12 per person fee and the access pass is available at Barton Warnock Environmental Center, located in Lajitas, TX, online from **Texas Parks & Wildlife Department**, or anywhere hunting/fishing licenses are sold. Maravillas is closed for river access during deer season.

Take-out: Permission to take-out at Dryden Crossing should be obtained by calling Jon Tom Lawrence at 432-940-3609 or 432-345-3300.

Lower Canyons release form

All visitors who float the lower canyons are required to fill out the release form:

Assumption of Risks and Agreements of Release and Indemnity form

Upstream of the Wild & Scenic River, **Santa Elena Canyon** is inside the boundaries of Big Bend National Park. A number of guide books are available from the Big Bend Natural History Association to help you decide and prepare for your trip.

Got gear?

Three options are available if you desire to make a river trip: you can bring your own equipment, rent equipment, or hire a guide service that will provide all permits, food, equipment, and shuttles.

- **Local Outfitters**

Shuttle Service, Equipment Rental, and Guided Trips

The businesses listed below provide a wide variety of services, including shuttles, equipment rental, and guided trips. Please contact these businesses individually for more information:

- **Angell Expeditions** 432-299-3713 or 305-336-2787
- **Big Bend River Tours** 800-545-4240
- **Big Bend Expeditions** 888-408-2945
- **Big Bend Overland Tours** 800-848-2363
- **Desert Sports** 888-989-6900
- **Far Flung Outdoor Center** 800-839-7238

- **Equipment checklist**

Required Equipment

A Park Ranger may inspect your boat for required equipment while you are on the river.

The following equipment is essential for a safe river trip:

- Boat—Canoes, kayaks, or heavy duty inflatable rafts.
- Life jackets—One U.S. Coast Guard approved life jacket per person. Must be worn on class II or greater water (International Scale). Must be worn on inner tubes or air mattresses. Bring one extra per group.
- Paddles/Oars—Each vessel (except inner tubes and air mattresses) must carry an extra paddle or oar, except for kayaks, which must carry one extra paddle per party.
- Patch kit/pump—All inflatable vessels, except inner tubes and air mattresses, must carry a patch kit and pump. Know how to use patch kit.
- Carry-out toilet—to pack out human waste.

Recommended Items

The following gear is recommended to increase safety, reduce impacts to the environment, and make your trip more enjoyable:

- First aid kit—to handle major and minor emergencies.
- Plastic trash bags—carry out all trash.
- Safety line—rope length 50'-100' and 3/8" diameter. Carry tie-downs to secure gear in vessel(s).
- Bailing bucket—to remove water from inside vessel(s).
- Water-tight containers—to keep food, clothing, gear dry.
- Small shovel for camp sanitation.
- Flashlight.

Private Property Rights along the River

Downstream from the Black Gap Wildlife Management Area, the Rio Grande Wild & Scenic River flows exclusively through private land.

Along the Lower Canyons

Downstream from the Black Gap Wildlife Management Area, the Rio Grande Wild & Scenic River flows exclusively through private land to its boundary at the Terrell/Val Verde county line. With the generous cooperation of the landowners, visitors holding the required permit are allowed limited access to the land along the river corridor, including some side canyon hikes. Refer to your river guide for more detailed information.

Please keep in mind at all times that you are on private land on this entire stretch of the river. The terms and conditions of your Lower Canyons permit recognize this, and are written accordingly, to acknowledge both the generosity of the landowners as well as their concerns. Your responsible behavior will help determine the long-term success of this unique arrangement between the National Park Service and private landowners.

Release form

All Lower Canyons users are required to fill out the release form at the time they receive their river use permit.

Human Waste Disposal

To protect the quality of the Rio Grande ecosystem and enhance the wilderness experience of a river trip, all users must properly dispose of human waste.

Nothing can spoil a river trip as quickly as the discovery of human waste or toilet paper at a prime camping spot. To protect the quality of the Rio Grande ecosystem and enhance the wilderness experience of a river trip, all users must properly dispose of human waste.

The National Park Service requires all commercial outfitters and private river parties to carry out their solid human waste on overnight trips.

River users may carry out solid human waste either in reusable toilets (bagless systems) or by using a blue-bag system (which chemically alters the bag's contents into an inert substance). Reusable toilets may be rented from local outfitters. Restop or Wag Bag (single-use bag systems) can be purchased at park bookstores in Big Bend National Park, or ordered online from a variety of merchants.

Reusable toilet dump sites are located at the Santa Elena take-out (Santa Elena river trips), the Rio Grande Village campground (Mariscal Canyon trips), Heath Canyon Ranch Resort (river trips exiting Boquillas Canyon at Heath Canyon), and at the Dryden Mercantile or Canyon RV Park in Sanderson (for Lower Canyons excursions). There is a small fee for use of any of the dump stations outside the park.

Day users are encouraged to also use a containment system.

River Use Regulations

Obey all river use regulations for your safety and the protection of park resources.

For the river environment's protection and your safety, observe these regulations on both sides of the river and on private land along the Rio Grande Wild and Scenic River.



- **Backcountry Use Permit Required:** Any river user must obtain a National Park Service backcountry use permit before watercraft is placed or operated on the Rio Grande within Big Bend National Park and for overnight trips on the Rio Grande Wild and Scenic River downstream from the park. Day-use inner tubes are exempt.
- **Personal Floatation Device (PFD):** USCG approved wearable PFDs are required for each person. They must be properly fitted, in serviceable condition, immediately accessible, and must be worn in Class II or greater whitewater. Type I, III, or V PFDs are required in Santa Elena, Mariscal, Boquillas, and the Lower Canyons.
- **Extra PFD Required:** Each group must carry an extra Type I, III, or V PFD.
- **Extra Paddles:** Each vessel shall carry an extra paddle or oar; kayaks shall have an extra paddle per party.
- **Safe Loads:** No vessel may carry more than a safe load (in persons or total weight). Do not overload vessels.

- **Waste Systems:** Each overnight boat group must bring and use an appropriate waste system. Approved options include personal chemical bagged waste containment systems, or a RV dump station compatible waste system.
- **Patch Kits:** Each group with inflatable vessels traveling through major canyons will carry an operable pump and patch kit capable of making major repairs.
- **Fire Pans:** Each overnight boat group must carry a fire pan with a 2-inch minimum rim. Fires must be contained in firepans, and all unburned charcoal carried out. Burn only charcoal or dead and down wood.
- **Use or Discharge of Firearms Prohibited.** All wildlife is protected by federal law. No possession of weapons, traps, or explosives. Possession of firearms or ammunition is a felony in Mexico, including in Mexican waters.
- **Contain Your Trash and Pack It Out:** Leave no trace behind, including cigarette butts, toilet paper, or food scraps.
- **No Pets in the Backcountry:** Pets may harm or be harmed by wildlife. Pets can only go where vehicles can go.
- **Collecting or Disturbing Natural or Historic Features is Prohibited:** Leave park features intact for others to enjoy.
- **Generator Use is Prohibited:** Generators use is prohibited in backcountry areas.
- **Do Not Feed Wildlife:** Feeding wildlife is illegal, and it often results in rangers having to destroy the animal.
- **Areas Closed to Camping:** Camping is not permitted in the following areas: from the upstream end of the Santa Elena Nature Trail to 0.75 mile downstream from Castolon; within 0.5 mile of the San Vicente Crossing; from La Clocha to the Boquillas Canyon Trail.
- **Motorized Watercraft Limits.** Motorized watercraft is limited to conventional boats with up to 60 horsepower inboard or outboard motors. Gas-powered motorized watercraft are prohibited in Santa Elena Canyon (from western park boundary to Santa Elena Canyon take-out), and Boquillas Canyon (from entrance of Boquillas Canyon to eastern park boundary). Except for October, Mariscal Canyon (from Talley to Solis), is off-limits to motorized watercraft.
- **Jet Skis Are Prohibited:** No jet ski use within park boundaries.
- **Group Size Limits:** Private group sizes are limited to 20 people from Talley to Solis, Boquillas Canyon, and the Lower Canyons. Group sizes are limited to 30 people in other river areas.
- **Commercial Group Limits:** Commercial groups will follow the above group size limits for clients; not including guides. Commercial groups are also required to obtain a Commercial Use Authorization.
- **International Travel:** This permit allows for boating the waters of Big Bend National Park and the Rio Grande Wild and Scenic River; it does not grant permission for entering Mexico.

Recommendations

The NPS recommends the following for your safety and the protection of the river environment:

- **High River Levels:** When the river exceeds 2,000 cubic feet per second (cfs) on the Johnson's Ranch gauge, permits should be limited to the following boats in Santa Elena,

Mariscal, and Lower Canyons: inflatable rafts with a minimum of three air chambers (excluding thwarts) and minimum dimensions of 6 by 12 feet; rigid, decked canoes and kayaks that exclude water when used with a spray skirt; open canoes 50 percent filled with flotation; dories; and sport kayaks. This suggestion also applies when an upstream rise causes any such section to exceed 2,000 cfs.

- **Wear PFDs:** Wear PFDs at all times; carry one extra per trip. Type II PFDs (horsecollar) are not allowed in Santa Elena, Mariscal, or the Lower Canyons and not recommended in the other sections.
- **Survival Gear:** Each river party should carry a suitable amount of survival gear, including a first aid kit, extra water, sun protection, rain gear, a throwline, and an extra rope at least 50 feet long and 3/8 inch in diameter.
- **Safe Capacity:** The safe capacity for inflatable craft should be considered 1/2 the manufacturer's rated load. If no such rating can be found, the mid-line of the boat should be at least 2 inches above the water line. The safe capacity for canoes is no more than 2 persons and 100 pounds of gear in Class III or greater whitewater.
- **Scout Rapids:** All major rapids should be scouted. Consider portaging.
- **Treat Drinking Water:** Springs may be contaminated. Treat water from a natural source before drinking.
- **Camp Safely/Secure Boats:** Because sudden river rises occur, camp well above the high water mark and out of any side canyon or arroyo. Secure boats with ropes and tie each craft separately.
- **Protect Valuables:** Theft of property from unoccupied vehicles and campsites is a problem in remote areas. Leave no valuables in vehicles.
- **Emergencies:** In the event of an emergency, an "X" marked on the ground by any means visible from the air signifies that help is needed. Carry two 3-by-10-foot strips of international orange colored material and a signal mirror. Flights over the river are limited; do not count on being spotted quickly.

River Safety

By giving forethought to your actions, you can have a safe, exciting, and rewarding experience while floating the Rio Grande Wild & Scenic River.



Rafting the Rapids
NPS Photo/Big Bend National Park

River Use Regulations

- Obey all river use regulations.

On the river:

- PFDs. Adjust the PFD to fit and wear it getting into the boat and through any fast moving water. -Take care of your PFD, keep it handy and out of the bilge.
- Go slow getting into and out of the boat; kneel down through fast water and during any maneuvers.
- Remain plumb and centered in your canoe. Do not lean upstream, it is better to lean into any object that the canoe has struck or has become lodged against.
- If your canoe is likely to enter cane or tree branches, kneel down and duck, be especially careful of your eyes and watch for loose articles that may be swept off the boat; i.e. hats, sunglasses, PFDs, etc.
- Keep the boat in front of you and the boat behind you in sight. We stay together and help each other when there is a mishap.
- Be careful of your footing in and around the water. The river bottom is rocky, slippery, muddy, and unknown to you; when possible, step where you can see your footing and never dive into the river.
- Scout problem areas, consider lining.

Unplanned swims:

- Get free of the boat and get upstream of the boat.
- Keep feet up and pointed downstream. Try to swim the boat to shore.
- Right the canoe as soon as possible and alert folks to any gear that needs retrieving.

At camp:

- Watch where you put your hands and feet.
- Slow down and think about all actions. Landings are often awkward places to load and unload gear. Get help with help with heavy items, watch your back.
- Secure boats, PFDs and all other items from wind and rising water.

General:

- Drink lots of water.
- Protect yourself from the elements, wear a hat and use sun block liberally.
- Do you have any allergies? Do you require medication?
- Know location of safety equipment.

Water Quality & River Users

The quality of water in the Rio Grande through the Big Bend region is highly variable. Big Bend National Park staff sample the water for bacterial levels on a monthly basis at several locations within the park.



Rio Grande Water Quality—information for river users

The quality of water in the Rio Grande through the Big Bend region is highly variable. Big Bend National Park staff sample the water for bacterial levels on a monthly basis at several locations within the park. The samples require 24 hours for incubation, delaying results and preventing timely notification of poor water quality conditions. However, the sample results have shown some trends between river flow levels and high bacteria counts.

The data shows that just after rainstorms, and when flow levels are rising, the bacterial counts rise and may exceed the recommended levels for contact recreation such as swimming. This is likely caused by runoff from creeks and other tributaries carrying animal waste and other pollutants into the Rio Grande. This occurs primarily during the summer monsoon season, between June and October, but can happen at any time of year.

Bacteria, such as Fecal Coliform and *E. Coli* can cause illness if ingested. Children are particularly susceptible to bacterial infection. Small children are more likely to be exposed through splashing, and otherwise getting river water in their eyes, mouths, ears or nose.

On the other hand, during periods of prolonged low flows, the bacterial levels tend to be very low, and well within safe limits of state standards for recreation. During low flows, the river tends to be high in salts as is common in desert rivers below dams. The high salinity may reduce the amount of bacteria in the water during low flows. Because many of the small communities along the river do not have adequate sewage treatment facilities, there may be bacteria in the water immediately downstream of these towns even during periods of low flow.

People who raft and canoe down the river will probably not be at high risk, however precautions should be taken to reduce the chances of ingesting river water, especially by children.

What precautions should you take on the river?

- Never drink river water
- Boil river water for 10 minutes prior to use for rinsing dishes, etc.
- Disinfect cuts or other open sores after exposure to river water
- Prevent children from immersing their heads in the water or otherwise getting water into their mouth, eyes, ears or nose.

During and soon after high flows and/or rainstorm:

- Avoid prolonged exposure to the river water (i.e. don't spend long periods of time swimming)
- Avoid immersing your head in the water.
- Keep very young children out of the water

Leave No Trace

Be a steward of the land; during your visit to Big Bend, do everything you can to minimize your impact on the desert landscape.



Southeast Rim View
NPS Photo/Cookie Ballou

Be a steward of the land; during your visit to Big Bend, do everything you can to minimize your impact on the desert landscape.

Plan Ahead and Prepare

Big Bend is a land of extremes. Plan on high desert temperatures in the summer with little to no shade; in the winter freezing temperatures are possible in the Chisos Mountains. Schedule your visit to avoid peak season. Visit in small groups. Split larger parties into groups of 4–6. Use a map and compass to eliminate the use of marking paint, rock cairns or flagging.

Travel and Camp on Durable Surfaces

Durable surfaces include established trails and campsites, rock, and gravel. Protect riparian areas by camping at least 100 yards from springs, creek beds, and tinajas. Good campsites are found, not made. While on the trail, walk in single file in the middle of the trail, even when wet or muddy. Keep campsites small. Focus on areas where vegetation is absent.

Dispose of Waste Properly

Pack it in, pack it out. Inspect your campsite and rest areas for trash or spilled foods. Pack out all trash, leftover food, and litter. Deposit solid human waste in cat-holes dug 6 to 8 inches deep at least 0.25 mile from water, camp, and trails. Cover and disguise the cat hole when finished. Pack out toilet paper and hygiene products.

Leave What You Find

Preserve the past. Examine, but do not touch, cultural or historic structures and artifacts. Leave rocks, wildflowers and other natural objects as you find them. Avoid introducing or transporting non-native species. Do not build structures, furniture, or dig trenches.

Minimize Campfire Impacts

Campfires are not allowed in Big Bend National Park. In order to cook foods, you may use a backpacking stove, portable fuel stove or the barbeque grills in your campsite.

Respect Wildlife

Observe Big Bend's wildlife from a distance. Do not follow or approach them. Never feed wild animals. Feeding wild animals damages their health, alters natural behaviors, and exposes them to predators and other dangers. Protect wildlife and your food by storing rations and trash securely. Pets are not allowed in the backcountry or on trails. Pets should be on leash and under supervision at all times.

Be Considerate of Other Visitors

Respect other visitors and protect the quality of their experience. Be courteous. Yield to other users on the trail. Step to the downhill side of the trail when encountering pack stock. Take breaks and camp away from trails and other visitors. Let nature's sound prevail. Avoid loud voices and noises.

Solo Hikers & Boaters

Solo backcountry users obtaining a backcountry camping permit are strongly encouraged to fill out and submit a Solo Hiker/Boater information sheet when receiving a camping permit. This information sheet assists searchers should you become lost or injured. Please take the time to fill it out completely. You must return your permit to a visitor center within 12 hours of leaving the backcountry to insure a search is not initiated.

In addition to the form, park staff will ask to take digital photographs of the hiker/boater's equipment and boot print.

Bird Watching

Big Bend's location, (near the 100th meridian in the middle of the continent) along a migration route, is ideal for bird diversity throughout the year.

**A Birder's Paradise**

Big Bend's location, near the 100th meridian in the middle of the continent and along a migration route, is ideal for bird diversity throughout the year. Northern species migrate here for the warm winter climate, while birds from the tropics range this far north to breed in the spring. One of Big Bend's highlights, the Colima warbler, is found exclusively in the United States in the Chisos Mountains of Big Bend National Park from April to September.

Birding Hotspots

The park has a variety of excellent birding locations because of its multiplicity of habitats including open desert, riparian river corridor and desert springs, moist forested canyons and woodlands of pinyon-oak-juniper, and the transition zones in between these areas.

Patience, a good field guide, and knowledge of where to look are the keys to locating the birds of Big Bend. A checklist of birds is available for purchase at any visitor center and is a great aid in determining which species are likely to be present, and the habitats where they are found.

A visit to any of these key habitats will provide good opportunities to observe a variety of birds.

- **Rio Grande Village**



Pied-billed grebes in the Rio Grande Village Nature Trail beaver pond.
NPS Photo/Cookie Ballou

The riparian corridor at Rio Grande Village offers some of the best birding in the park year-round. You may wish to start your day with a hike along the Rio Grande Village Nature Trail, which begins adjacent to campsite #18. The trail crosses a beaver pond where you might see wading or shore birds like herons, bitterns, ducks, and kingfishers. Other birds seen along the trail include white-winged, mourning, and Inca doves, the yellow-billed cuckoo, Say's and black phoebes, verdin, summer tanager, painted bunting, northern cardinal, and orchard oriole.

Walk around the perimeter of the campground, including the no generator zone, and look for vermilion, ash-throated, and brown-crested flycatchers. Peek into the mesquite thickets where you might find Bell's vireo, curve-billed thrasher, or black-tailed gnatcatcher. Overhead, you might catch a glimpse of black, red-tailed, sharp-shinned, or Cooper's hawks soaring with turkey vultures and black vultures.

At the west end of Rio Grande Village is the Daniels' Ranch picnic area. The cottonwood trees across from the ranch ruins are one of the best areas to find both golden-fronted and ladder-backed woodpeckers, and northern flickers. Consider a short stroll to the Rio Grande to search for the Mexican mallard, and both green and blue-winged teals. Look up and you may see northern rough-winged, barn, or cliff swallows flying overhead.

- **Chisos Mountains**



Acorn Woodpecker
NPS Photo/Matthew Yarbroug

The piñon-oak-juniper woodland in the higher elevations of the Chisos Mountains and their foothills attract many species of birds that would not otherwise be in Big Bend National Park. Around the campground, visitor center, trailhead, and lodge look for Mexican jays, bushtits, and during breeding season, Scott's orioles or hepatic tanagers.

In the higher elevations of the Chisos, look for band tailed pigeons, acorn woodpeckers, Hutton's, plumbeous, blue-headed and Cassin's vireos, and tufted titmouse. Rock, canyon, and Bewick's wrens, Townsend's warbler, western, summer, and hepatic

tanagers are also often sighted along Chisos trails. In late summer, when mountain sage blooms, watch for hummingbirds feeding on its brilliant red blossoms. Lucifer, broad-tailed, broad-billed, rufous, calliope, beryline, blue-throated, magnificent, and ruby-throated hummingbirds have all been seen here at different times of the year. Zone-tailed hawks nest near the pass at Toll Mountain, and peregrine falcon's sightings have been reported from the South Rim. In the moist woodlands of Boot canyon, look for the Colima warbler, Big Bend's specialty bird.

In the higher elevations also look for painted redstarts, cordilleran flycatchers, or white-breasted nuthatches, which are usually common. On a few occasions sightings of rare birds, such as the red face warbler or white-eared hummingbird, have been reported from Boot Canyon as well. After dark look and listen, for flammulated, western, and eastern screech owls and Whip-poor-wills.

- **Cottonwood Campground/Santa Elena Canyon** Birding along the riparian corridor between Cottonwood Campground and Santa Elena Canyon yields a diverse array of habitats from mesquite thicket to cottonwoods.
- **Dugout Wells** The wells often create a year-round wet spot surrounded by desert, and provide a great place for desert resident birds and migratory species passing through.
- **Sam Nail Ranch** The combination of water and trees make this desert oasis an excellent location for birding. Look for both desert and migratory bird species.
- **Blue Creek** This is one of the better bird watching places in the foothills of the Chisos Mountains. In spring, look for gray and black-capped vireos and Lucifer hummingbirds.
- **Hot Springs** Where Tornillo Creek meets the Rio Grande. Good for wading, shore, and desert birds.
- **Terlingua Abajo** A large spring along Terlingua Creek has been home to numerous unique birds and stands out as one of the wettest spots in the park, with the exception of the Rio Grande.

Observations/Documentation

Park visitors are often our eyes and ears for rare or unique bird sightings. If you see something worth recording (a bird listed as rare, sporadic, or otherwise not listed on the park's checklist), please stop in at a visitor center and fill out an observation report. Be sure to record all pertinent information such as an overall description of the bird, activity or behavioral comments, habitat, time of day, and possibly the most important: the exact location of where the bird was seen.

Day Hikes

Big Bend is a hiker's paradise containing the largest expanse of road less public lands in Texas. More than 150 miles of trails offer opportunities for day hikes or backpacking trips.



NPS Photo/Jennette Jurado

Elevations range from 1,800 feet along the Rio Grande to 7,832 feet on Emory Peak in the Chisos Mountains. Elevation changes produce an exception variety of plants, animals, and scenic vistas. Generally, hikers can expect a 20°F temperature difference between low and high elevation hiking areas.



Mule Ears Peaks
NPS Photo/Blake Trester

Desert Hikes

Desert trails range from short, easy nature walks to multi-day treks marked only by rock cairns, if at all. Remote routes provide a wilderness adventure for experienced hikers where silence and solitude are key protected resources.

The Chihuahuan Desert covers about 80% of the park and surrounds the Chisos Mountains. Bare, rocky ground and sparse vegetation are hallmarks of the desert, but there is plenty of life here. Look for termite nests along plant stems, exoskeletons of millipedes, animal scat, and rodent and reptile tunnels. Bird life is plentiful, especially in the morning; look for nests hidden in yuccas and cacti. In the spring, bluebonnets, paintbrush, bi-color mustard, desert marigold, yucca, ocotillo, and cacti blossoms add color to the desert landscape.



Dugout Wells
NPS Photo/Cookie Ballou

Chihuahuan Desert Nature Trail

Difficulty: Easy; Distance: 0.5-mile round trip
Begin at Dugout Wells, 6 miles southeast of Panther Junction

Both natural and cultural history are evident at Dugout Wells. On this easy desert stroll you will see remnants of human settlement and typical Chihuahuan Desert habitat. A shady oasis with cottonwood trees and tables at Dugout Wells provides a good area for picnicking and bird watching.



Chimneys Arch
NPS Photo/Jennette Jurado

Chimneys Trail

Difficulty: Moderate; Distance: 4.8 miles round trip
Begin at mile 13, Ross Maxwell Scenic Drive

A moderate hike (due to distance) to a series of prominent volcanic dike formations. The "chimneys" have always been an important landmark, and Indian rock art marks the base of these high pinnacles.

The chimneys are 2.4 miles away and easily seen from the trailhead. The trail beyond the chimneys continues west another 4.6 miles and ends on the Old Maverick Road near Luna's jacal. This is an enjoyable 7-mile hike if you can arrange transportation on the opposite end. From the chimneys you can also head northwest 1.5 miles to the huge cottonwood tree that marks Red Ass Spring. Return the way you came.



Devil's Den
NPS Photo/Reine Wonite

Devil's Den

Difficulty: Moderate; Distance: 5.6 miles round trip
Begin at pull-off, 3.5 miles south of the Persimmon Gap Visitor Center

Devil's Den is a dramatic limestone slot canyon in the park's northern backcountry. Follow the trail towards Dog Canyon. After 1.5 miles take a side trail off to the right into a wash. In another 0.5 mile, take the large wash that intersects from the left which leads directly into Devil's Den. You may hike into the den, or hike up along the southern edge of the deep crevice for great views into the canyon. You can then enter the den and hike back through it. Small tinajas hold water during the rainy season.



Balanced Rock
NPS Photo/Blake Trester

Grapevine Hills Trail

Difficulty: Easy; Distance: 2.2 miles round trip
Begin 6 miles down Grapevine Hills improved dirt road at the parking area.

This trail leads to a group of balanced rocks in the heart of the Grapevine Hills. Initially, the trail follows a gravel wash, then climbs steeply for the last quarter mile into the boulders. Grapevine Hills is an exposed laccolith, with many giant, rounded boulders that are tempting to climb, but watch for snakes.



Lower Burro Mesa Pour-off
Trail
NPS Photo/Cookie Ballou

Lower Burro Mesa Pour-off Trail

Difficulty: Easy; Distance: 1-mile round trip
Begin at the end of Burro Mesa Spur Road off the Ross Maxwell Scenic Drive

This trail leads through a gravel drainage, and ends in a narrow box canyon where water has carved a deep channel into Burro Mesa. The end of the trail is the base of a 100-foot pour-off. Usually dry, the smooth, polished pour-off attests to the power of water that this canyon during summer rains.



Mule Ears Spring
NPS Photo/Cookie Ballou

Mule Ears Spring Trail

Difficulty: Moderate; Distance: 3.8 miles round trip
Mule Ears Overlook parking area, mile 15, Ross Maxwell Scenic Drive

This hike leads through the foothills of the Chisos Mountains, skirts Trap Mountain, and crosses several arroyos. Near the spring is an old rock corral. The spring itself is overgrown with shrubs, but ferns and cattails also grow there. Remember, no contaminating/bathing in backcountry springs.



Prickly Pear Blossoms
NPS Photo/Cookie Ballou

Panther Path

Difficulty: Easy; Distance: 50-yard loop
Begin at Panther Junction Visitor Center

This easy, wheelchair accessible loop winds through a desert garden in front of the Panther Junction Visitor Center. A trail brochure and numbered stops identify many of the cacti and common plants of the Chihuahuan Desert and explain their historic, cultural, and medicinal uses.



Sam Nail Ranch
NPS Photo/Cookie Ballou

Sam Nail Ranch

Difficulty: Easy; Distance: 0.5-mile loop
Begin at Mile 3, Ross Maxwell Scenic Drive

An easy, well-maintained trail leads through the old homestead of Jim and Sam Nail and Sam's wife, Nena. There are interesting historic remnants here, including part of the adobe walls of the house and two windmills, one which is still in operation. This is a beautiful desert oasis and a great spot for birding and wildlife viewing.



Tuff Canyon
NPS Photo/Blake Trester

Tuff Canyon

Difficulty: Easy; Distance: 0.75-mile round trip
Begin at Tuff Canyon overlook on the Ross Maxwell Scenic Drive

Tuff Canyon's three overlooks offer great views into Tuff Canyon, but you can continue on the trail at the south end of the parking lot to go down into the canyon. Tuff, made of welded volcanic ash, comprises this whitish canyon. During the rainy season, the canyon fills with pools of water.



Upper Burro Mesa Pour-off
NPS Photo/Jennette Jurado

Upper Burro Mesa Pour-off Trail

Difficulty: Moderate; Distance: 3.8 miles round trip
Begin at pull-off, mile 6.6, Ross Maxwell Scenic Drive

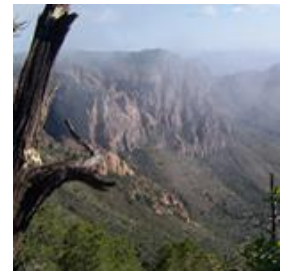
This route follows a dry wash downstream to the top of the 100-foot Burro Mesa Pour-off. The trail includes some large rocks to climb down, where some rock scrambling may be necessary. Pay attention on the return hike to ensure that you follow the same drainages. Trail subject to flash flooding.

Mountain Hikes

Rising 7832' in elevation, the Chisos Mountains preserve a relict forest of oaks, pines, junipers, madrones, and Arizona cypress. There are about twenty miles of trails within the Chisos with excellent year-round hiking opportunities.



Hiking the Lost Mine Trail
NPS Photo/Cookie Ballou



Chisos ridgetop view
NPS Photo/Big Bend National Park

It is not uncommon to see tracks and scat of black bear, mountain lion, and gray fox along Chisos Mountains trails. Carmen Mountain white-tailed deer, rock squirrels, whiptail lizards, spotted towhees, tufted titmice, and Mexican jays are also common in these mountains.

NOTE: Smoking is prohibited on all trails in the Chisos Mountains.



Boot Canyon Trail
NPS Photo/Big Bend
National Park

Boot Canyon Trail

Difficulty: Strenuous; Distance 3.5 miles from the Chisos Basin Trailhead then continues 2.8 miles to the South Rim
Begin at the Chisos Basin Trailhead

Leads from the Pinnacles Pass to the South Rim, passing through the lushest environment in the Chisos Mountains. Depending on annual rainfall, water may be present in pools along the canyon during parts of the year. Arizona Cypress and other trees may be found here, and nowhere else in Big Bend National Park. Look for Colima warblers here as well.



Chisos Basin Loop Trail
NPS Photo/Cookie Ballou

Chisos Basin Loop Trail

Difficulty: Moderate; Distance 1.8 miles round trip
Begin at the Chisos Basin Trailhead

The trail climbs gradually through shady stands of Mexican pine, oak, and juniper with many outstanding vistas of the window, and mountains surrounding the basin. Dense vegetation in the arroyos provides good habitat for bears and mountain lions; you may see tracks where they crossed the trail. Also, look for Mexican jays in the pines, and hummingbirds and Scott's orioles in the agaves when in bloom. Though this loop trail may be done in either direction, following it counterclockwise is the easiest.



Emory Peak Trail
NPS Photo/Cookie Ballou

Emory Peak

Difficulty: Strenuous; Distance: 10.5 miles round trip
Begin at the Chisos Basin Trailhead

Ascend the forested Pinnacles trail for 3.5 miles to the Emory Peak trail junction (on your right). Then take the 1-mile spur trail to the peak which has nice vistas along the way. The last quarter mile or so climbs steeply, and the last 25 feet require a scramble up an exposed rock face, but the 360° view from Emory Peak, the highest point in the park, is superb. The antenna and equipment are part of Big Bend's two-way radio system.



Lost Mine Trail View
NPS Photo/Big Bend
National Park

Lost Mine Trail

Difficulty: Moderate; Distance: 4.8 miles round trip
Begin at mile 5.1 on the Basin Road, limited parking

This trail serves as an outstanding introduction the flora and fauna of the Chisos Mountains. With limited time, hike to marker 10 (about 1 mile), where a saddle offers stunning views of Casa Grande and Juniper Canyon. The remainder of the trail climbs steeply in and out of juniper, oak, and pine forest. The trail abruptly levels out at the ridge with superb views of Pine Canyon and the Sierra del Carmen in Mexico. A brochure is available at the trailhead.



South Rim View
NPS photo/Big Bend National Park

South Rim

Difficulty: Strenuous; Distance 12-14.5 miles round trip
Begin at Basin Trailhead

This challenging trail is well worth the 2,000-foot gain, as midway are the stunning vistas from the South Rim. Ascend either the steeper Pinnacles or more gradual Laguna Meadows Trail. During Peregrine Falcon nesting season, the Northeast and Southeast portions of this trail are closed.



Window Trail
NPS Photo/Big Bend
National Park

Window Trail

Difficulty: Moderate; Distance: 5.6 miles round trip
Begin at the Chisos Basin Trailhead

This trail descends through Oak Creek Canyon to the Window pour-off which frames panoramic desert vistas. During wetter periods Oak Creek may be flowing, and must be crossed several times. Use caution on this trail: the top of the Window pour-off is slick rock with no railings, and the return hike is uphill.



Window View Trail
NPS Photo/Cookie Ballou

Window View Trail

Difficulty: Easy; 0.3-mile round trip
Begin at the Chisos Basin Trailhead

This easy, paved wheelchair accessible trail circles a low hill with excellent views of the mountain peaks surrounding the Chisos Basin, and a view through the window. Benches along the trail offers a place to sit and enjoy a classic Big Bend sunset.

River Hikes

Dense stands of reeds and mesquite thickets line the river along much of the park boundary making human access difficult, but providing excellent habitat for wildlife. The best way to enjoy this area is from the river itself, but several short hikes provide access into river canyons or elsewhere along its banks.

The Rio Grande creates a distinct environment in Big Bend National Park. Countless bird species can be found in the riverbank vegetation. The river provides water for many desert animals; look along the muddy shoreline for tracks, signs, and scat.



View from Rio Grande
Village Nature Trail
NPS Photo/Cookie Ballou



Boquillas Canyon Trail
River View
NPS Photo/Cookie Ballou

Boquillas Canyon Trail

Difficulty: Moderate; Distance: 1.4 miles round trip
Begins at the end of the Boquillas Canyon Spur Road

The Boquillas Canyon trail climbs from the parking to the top of a cliff overlooking the Rio Grande. On this bluff, mortar holes from ancient inhabitants can be seen. Continue down to the river's edge and into the canyon until the canyon walls meet the river. Sandy slopes in the canyon are fun for children.



Nautilus Fossil
NPS Photo/Reine Wonite

Hot Springs Canyon Trail

Difficulty: Moderate; Distance: 6 miles round trip
Begin at Daniel's Ranch or Hot Springs

This 3-mile trail (either direction) connects Daniel's Ranch and the Hot Springs. In places, it runs close to the river; in other areas along the rim of Hot Springs Canyon. This trail offers beautiful views of the Rio Grande, Chisos Mountains, and Del Carmen Mountains. No shade makes this trail a challenge in summer heat.



Historic Hot Springs
NPS Photo/Jennette
Jurado

Hot Springs Historic Trail

Difficulty: Easy; Distance: 1-mile round trip
Begin at Hot Springs parking lot

This trail passes remains of a resort, pictographs, homestead, and hot springs; a brochure at the trailhead offers more information. The 105°F springs are a popular destination (0.5-mile roundtrip), but one can continue to where the trail forks, leading to the top of the bluff and back to the parking lot.



Beaver Pond
Nature Trail
NPS Photo/Cookie Ballou

Rio Grande Village Nature Trail

Difficulty: Easy; Distance: 0.75-mile loop
Begin at Rio Grande Village Campground, Site #18

Although short and easy, the trail is very scenic and has fantastic opportunities for wildlife viewing, especially birds. The first 100 yards is wheelchair accessible and crosses a boardwalk through a spring-fed wetland. Then the trail gradually climbs a limestone hill on RGV with panoramic vistas of the Rio Grande, and the Chisos and Del Carmen Mountains. This trail is great for sunsets.



Santa Elena Canyon
NPS Photo/Blake Trester

Santa Elena Canyon Trail

Difficulty: Moderate; Distance: 1.7 miles round trip
Begins at terminus of the Ross Maxwell Scenic Drive

This trail leads into the stunning Santa Elena Canyon. After crossing Terlingua Creek, the trail ascends on paved steps to a vista, then descends back to the water's edge, continuing into the canyon until the canyon walls meet the water. A Big Bend classic. Trail is impassable when Terlingua Creek floods.

Ranger-led Programs

Learn more about the nature, science, history, and culture of Big Bend National Park with a ranger as your guide.



Ranger Guided Walk
NPS Photo/Ann Wildermuth

Ranger-led programs

Join a park ranger for a guided hike, evening program, talk, or workshop on Big Bend's natural and cultural history. Programs are generally offered daily, and are free of charge. Programs vary weekly; current schedules are posted at park visitor centers or may be viewed online.

Personal Ranger Tours

Personal guided ranger tours are available on a first-come, first served basis for families, groups, or individuals. The cost is \$40.00 per hour, with a four-hour minimum. Fees cover salary, government vehicle mileage, and administrative costs, and can be paid by check or money order only. Personal ranger tours also depend on availability of personnel [extremely limited during the months of May, June, July, and August, and during Thanksgiving week, Christmas week, and Spring Break].

Personal ranger tours usually focus on a specialized topic or specific park area. For a general park tour, please contact one of the park's **local outfitters**.

Shuttle Service, Equipment Rental, and Guided Trips

The businesses listed below provide a wide variety of services, including shuttles, equipment rental, and guided trips. Please contact these businesses individually for more information:

- **Angell Expeditions** 432-299-3713 or 305-336-2787
- **Big Bend River Tours** 800-545-4240
- **Big Bend Expeditions** 888-408-2945
- **Big Bend Overland Tours** 800-848-2363
- **Desert Sports** 888-989-6900
- **Far Flung Outdoor Center** 800-839-7238

The following guidelines apply to personal ranger tours:

- Transportation is not provided for individuals or groups, and generally doesn't include trips on backcountry roads.
- Personal tours are highly dependent on staff availability.
- Arrangements for personal tours must be made at least two weeks in advance.

Scenic Drives

100 miles of paved roads and 150 miles of dirt roads connect the desert to the mountains and the river and offer exceptional ways to explore the park by vehicle.



Cenizo in bloom along scenic drive
NPS Photo/Jennette Jurado



Mule Ears Peaks
NPS Photo/Blake Trester

Paved Roads

More than 100 miles of paved roads throughout Big Bend National Park showcase not only gorgeous vistas, but also invite you to marvel at the geological splendor, contemplate the lives of early settlers, and observe the incredible diversity of plants and animals that call this home. Taking a scenic drive can be an ideal way to explore the park if you have limited time or if weather is not conducive for other activities.



Chisos Basin drive
NPS Photo/Big Bend
National Park

Chisos Basin Road

6 miles (10km)

A drive to the Chisos Basin is an excellent way to experience the transition between arid desert and cooler mountain habitats. As this scenic, winding road rises over two thousand feet above the desert floor, it offers breath-taking vistas of the mountain peaks and the erosion-formed basin area. This road was constructed by the Civilian Conservation Corps in the 1930s. The road is not recommended for the Civilian Conservation Corps in the 1930s. The road is not recommended for trailers longer than 20 feet or RVs over 24 feet due to its sharp curves and steep grades (as

much as 15%). The Chisos Basin has a visitor center, campground, lodge, restaurant, camp store, and access to miles of hiking trails.



Mule Ears Peaks
NPS Photo/Blake Trester

Ross Maxwell Scenic Drive

30 miles (48km)

A trip along the Ross Maxwell Scenic Drive highlights the geologic splendor Big Bend is famous for, and offers many scenic overlooks and exhibits along the way. Sotol Vista, Mule Ears Overlook, and Tuff Canyon are all worthwhile stops. History is highlighted at Sam Nail Ranch, Homer Wilson (Blue Creek) Ranch, and the Castolon Historic Compound. Castolon has a visitor center, camp store, and nearby is the Cottonwood Campground.

Continue the drive to the magnificent Santa Elena Canyon, where limestone cliffs rise 1,500' above the Rio Grande. A short trail leads into the canyon.

Return by the same route, or take the gravel Old Maverick Road to the western entrance of the park. The Old Maverick Road is usually passable for most vehicles, but may be impassable after heavy rains. Check at a visitor center for current conditions.



Sam Nail Ranch
NPS Photo/Cookie Ballou

The Sam Nail Ranch

One of the many homesteads once active in the Big Bend, the remnants of Sam Nail Ranch now provide shade and habitat for desert wildlife. A windmill still pumps water and attracts an interesting variety of birdlife. Sit quietly on the bench and listen for javelinas moving through the brush, or enjoy watching painted buntings, green-tailed towhees, and mockingbirds.



Homer Wilson Ranch
NPS Photo/Cookie Ballou

Blue Creek Ranch Overlook

This overlook provides a view of the headquarters of the Homer Wilson Ranch, one of the largest in the region prior to the establishment of the park. A short trail leads down the ranch buildings and connects with the Blue Creek Canyon and Dodson trails.



Sotol Vista
NPS Photo/Jennette Jurado

Sotol Vista Overlook

From the viewpoint perched high above the desert floor you are rewarded an unparalleled vista of the entire western side of Big Bend National Park, including magnificent Santa Elena Canyon in the distance.



Lower Burro Mesa Pouroff
NPS Photo/Cookie Ballou

Lower Burro Mesa Pouroff

Take the 1.5-mile side road to the base of the colorful cliffs of Burro Mesa. A 0.5-mile trail leads into a hidden box canyon with a high, dry waterfall. A variety of desert plants and superb geology surround you at this worthwhile roadside stop.



Mule Ears Peaks
NPS Photo/Blake Trester

Mule Ears Viewpoint

A beautiful viewpoint along the Ross Maxwell Scenic Drive. From the parking area, the Mule Ears Peaks dominate the view. A 2-mile long trail leads to a delightful desert spring.



Tuff Canyon
NPS Photo/Reine Wonite

Tuff Canyon

Tuff Canyon was carved out of soft volcanic tuff (compressed ash). The deep and narrow canyon is easily observed from two viewing platforms. If you wish, you may enter and hike through the gorge.



Castolon Historic District
NPS Photo/Reine Wonite

Castolon Historic District

Established as a cavalry camp in the early Twentieth Century, Castolon later served as the headquarters of the La Harmonia Company. A visitor center and camper store are located here. The Cottonwood campground is located nearby.



Santa Elena Canyon
NPS Photo/Big Bend
National Park

Santa Elena Canyon

The Rio Grande has sliced a 1,500-foot vertical chasm out of pure limestone to form one of the most magnificent canyons in the park. As you look down Santa Elena Canyon, the left wall of the canyon is in Mexico, while the right wall is in Texas. A fabulous trail follows the river upstream then drops down to the canyon floor. Taking a float trip through the canyon is also an enjoyable venture.



View along Old
Maverick Road
NPS Photo/Reine Wonite

Old Maverick Road

The Old Maverick Road runs between Maverick Junction and Santa Elena Canyon. It is a 14-mile improved dirt road that passes along the Terlingua Creek badlands on the west side of the park. A number of historic sites are located along the road.



Sierra del Carmen
NPS Photo/Cookie
Ballou

Panther Junction to Rio Grande Village

21 miles (34km)

The drive to Rio Grande Village traverses' ancient limestone and has marvelous vistas across the river to the magnificent Sierra del Carmen escarpment. In twenty miles, the road descends nearly two thousand feet.

There are several worthwhile stops and highlights along the way.

Dugout Wells includes a desert nature trail and a shady oasis, nice for picnicking and birding. A soak in the Historic Hot Springs is also a popular activity. The short hike into Boquillas Canyon leads to one of Big Bend's most scenic spots.

The Rio Grande Village Nature Trail is an excellent birding location; it crosses a wetland spring with a viewing platform then gradually climbs to a promontory with excellent panoramic views.



Rosillos Mountains
NPS/Big Bend National
Park

Persimmon Gap to Panther Junction

28 miles (45km)

This road connects the north entrance to park headquarters at Panther Junction. From Persimmon Gap, the road descends a long, gentle, gravel slope to Tornillo creek and Tornillo Flat. The Rosillos Mountains rise to the west; to the east the Dead Horse Mountains dominate the skyline.

Highlights include, trails to Dog Canyon and Devil's Den, the Fossil Bone Exhibit, and the Tornillo Creek hoodoos



Cenizo in bloom
NPS/Jennette Jurado

Maverick Entrance Station to Panther Junction

23 miles (37km)

This drive, through striking desert scenery, has excellent views of the surrounding mountains. Several roadside exhibits describe wildlife that might be seen along the drive. Junctions for the Chisos Basin road and Ross Maxwell Scenic Drive are located along this route.



Dagger Flat View
NPS Photo/Blake Trester

Improved Dirt Roads

Enjoy the shift from khaki-colored desert to a forest of giant yuccas on the Dagger Flat Auto Trail, or contemplate the harsh lifestyle representative in the primitive, long-since-abandoned structure of Luna's Jacal on the Old Maverick Road. Big Bend's improved dirt roads are accessible for most vehicles, but some are rougher than others and road conditions deteriorate quickly with a passing storm. Please inquire about current conditions before venturing out along one of these roads.



Dagger Flat Auto Trail
NPS Photo/Cookie Ballou

Dagger Flat Auto Trail

This seven-mile road (14 miles round-trip) winds eastward to a small valley with a forest of giant dagger yuccas. A self-guiding brochure is available and provides a key to the desert plants. Typically open to most vehicles, this road is also good for mountain biking. Speed limit on this narrow road is 25 mph: allow two hours round-trip. Sandy areas or muddy conditions may exist seasonally; rain makes this road difficult to drive or impassable. Please inquire about current road conditions.



Balanced Rock
NPS Photo/Blake Trester

Grapevine Hills Road

Travel 6.4 miles down this road to access the Grapevine Hills trailhead. Here, the 2.2-mile round-trip Grapevine Hills Trail leads to the picturesque Balanced Rock. Geologically, Grapevine Hill is a laccolith—a mushroom-shaped igneous intrusion that domed the rocks above, and was later exposed by erosion. The road is generally accessible to all vehicles, and begins 3.3 miles west of Panther Junction on the north side of the road. Beyond the trailhead, the road requires high-clearance, especially after any rainfall.



Historic Post Office at J.O.
Langford Hot Springs
NPS Photo/Cookie Ballou

Hot Springs Road

This two-mile gravel road descends a rough, narrow wash to the **Hot Springs Historic District**. Ruins of J.O. Langford's resort are located nearby. From the trailhead, the hot springs is 0.5 mile round-trip. There is also a one-mile loop from the hot springs that circles the bluff above; a third trail leads to Daniels' Ranch in Rio Grande Village, three miles to the east.

Note: Motor homes and oversize vehicles are prohibited on the one-way sections of the Hot Springs road.



Pictographs on the cliff at the Hot Springs
NPS Photo/Cookie Ballou



View along Old
Maverick Road
NPS Photo/Blake Trester

Old Maverick Road

The Old Maverick Road runs between Maverick Junction and Santa Elena Canyon. It is a 14-mile improved dirt road that passes along the Terlingua Creek badlands on the west side of the park. A number of historic sites are located near the road that you may visit as you gradually descend to the Rio Grande and Santa Elena. While usually passable for most vehicles, this road tends to be rough and wash boarded; the fourteen miles takes around an hour to drive. This road is subject to high water and flooding following rainstorms.



Mariscal Mine
NPS Photo/Cookie Ballou

Primitive Dirt Roads

Miles of primitive dirt roads lead across washboards and boulders, through canyons and creek beds, past old settlements and cemeteries. In addition to marvelous panoramic vistas, many of these roads access hiking trails, primitive roadside campsites, and the river. Primitive dirt roads are maintained for high-clearance vehicles only, and may require a 4WD. They may be rocky with areas of soft sand that are unsafe for sedans or RVs. Rain can make roads difficult to drive or impassable. Always inquire about current road conditions.



Rusted Automobile at
Mariscal Mine
NPS Photo/Cookie Ballou

Be Safe on Backcountry Roads

Before you set out to explore backcountry roads, make sure your vehicle and its tires are in good condition. A disabled vehicle on isolated roads can be a life-threatening situation. Check your vehicle's fluid levels and the air pressure in the tires to insure they are at the recommended levels. Make sure you have emergency equipment: a good spare tire, a tire repair kit and pump, extra belts and hoses, tools to change tires, and extra coolant or water for your vehicle's radiator. A shovel is also a handy tool to have in case your vehicle gets bogged down in sand.



Emergency tools and equipment
NPS Photo/Big Bend National Park

You must also provide for yourself and your passengers.

Carry plenty of water; you may encounter someone in the backcountry that really needs it (maybe yourself!). Carry some type of high energy food that will keep, such as trail mix, in case you need it.

You should also carry a first aid kit and sleeping gear in case you have to spend an unplanned night in your vehicle. Dress as if you were going hiking (hiking boots, long pants, long sleeve shirt, and a hat) so you are prepared to walk, if the need arises. Check on current road conditions at one of the visitor centers before you go, and let a friend or relative know where you are going and when you expect to return.

When driving, a slower speed is much easier on your vehicle, its tires, and its occupants, and it also allows you to better enjoy the scenery. Every vehicle has its limits; if you encounter a road obstacle or conditions that are beyond the limits of your vehicle, turn around; in most areas, you will usually have the option to do so.

Carry a map of the park and know where you are on the road at all times (keep track of how far you have traveled in case you have to walk back). If your vehicle becomes disabled, it is almost always best to stay with your vehicle. Hopefully a park ranger or another visitor will see you, or whoever you informed of your itinerary, will report you overdue. If walking becomes necessary, it is imperative that you carry water and stay on the road. Leave a note on the dashboard of your vehicle that says what the problem is and where you are going.

In addition to protecting yourself, you are also responsible for protecting and preserving the resources of the park. Stay on the established roadways. Off-road vehicle travel is not allowed. Ground or wood fires are also prohibited. Collecting rocks, plants, animals, artifacts, or any other park resources is illegal.

If you wish to camp in the backcountry, obtain a backcountry use permit from one of the visitor centers before you begin your trip.

Finally, remember to lock your vehicle if you are leaving it unattended, and secure your valuables.



Mountain sunset
NPS Photo/Jennette Jurado

Glenn Springs Road 16 miles (26km)

This road skirts the eastern slopes of the Chisos, and leads to the Glenn Springs Historic Site. As it descends from Glenn Springs to the River Road, it generally becomes smoother.

Pine Canyon Road 4 miles (6km)

From the Glenn Springs Road this short road leads to the Pine Canyon Trail.

Juniper Canyon Road 5 miles (8km)

From the Glenn Springs Road this short road leads to the Juniper Canyon Trail and Dodson Trail junction. This road is rocky and usually requires 4WD.



Ernst Tinaja
NPS Photo/Jennette Jurado

Old Ore Road 26 miles (43km)

Used in the early 1900s to transport ore from Mexican mines to the railroad station at Marathon, the Old Ore Road generally follows the route used by mule and pack trains a century ago. The road has excellent views of the Chisos Mountains across the Tornillo Creek drainage to the west. Ernst Tinaja, five miles from the southern end of the road, is a popular destination.



Rock Formation
NPS Photo/Cookie Ballou

River Road 51 miles (82km)

River Road traverses the southern portion of the park. While generally following the course of the Rio Grande, the road runs a considerable distance from the river, especially in its mid-section. Due to its length and usually rough road conditions, allow a full day to drive from end to end. Primitive roadside campsites (permit required) located along the road, allow for extended exploration. The west end is lesser used, and generally in a rougher condition. River Road crosses numerous washes; it is often impassable after rains.



Black Gap Road
NPS Photo/Eric Leonard

Black Gap Road 8.5 miles (14km)

This road connects the Glenn Springs Road with the River Road. This road is not maintained, and 4-wheel drive is required at all times.

Stargazing

On the clearest nights, around 2,000 stars are visible to the naked eye!

The Stars at Night are Big and Bright...

Big Bend is known as one of the outstanding places in North America for star gazing, in fact, it has the least light pollution of any other National Park unit in the lower 48 states. One factor that makes this possible is simply the sparse human occupation of this region. The obvious impression one gets of wildness in the Big Bend is the lack of visible lights indicating a house or a town. Most urban areas have such an abundance of light that very few stars are able to be seen. This can be a real surprise to visitors when they are outside in the Big Bend at night and see the Milky Way in its full glory for perhaps the first time in their life. Realistically one can see approximately 2000 stars on a clear night here compared to perhaps a few hundred in a medium sized city. The dark night sky has always been a visual impression in the Big Bend, with very few exceptions.



When recorded history began in the Big Bend, a traveler at night might see a dim glow of a campfire or a lamp through a window in an isolated camp, farm or ranch house. The light would perhaps give comfort

knowing that shelter, a meal or just other people were in the area. In the early 1900's, the mining at Terlingua introduced modern lighting to a few of the larger buildings in the area. Seeing this at night would definitely indicate more than just an isolated dwelling, it could mean "civilization" depending on who was viewing the lights. The light could also symbolize progress towards civilizing the frontier or bringing the 20th century to the citizens of the isolated Big Bend region.

Modern electric lights have changed the way people view and react to the night. Over the past hundred or so years, outdoor lighting has been increasing to the point where it's always light out, even at night. Some lighting is for safety, advertising, or other societal reasons. It has in effect, taken away the night. What ramifications does removing the dark night sky have on people? Does it make them feel safer? Has it changed what people do at night or how they view their surroundings?

Ancient peoples studied the stars for thousands of years and used these observations for navigation, predicting or confirming seasonal changes, and religious purposes. Stories were woven about the meanings of the positions of different stars, answers to life problems were foretold in the movements of heavenly bodies. Past peoples used the stars because they were an integral part of life. That has changed in most of the world with the advent of the electric light.

It seems now that our society has begun to realize the value of a lightless night sky. To leave the city and the light gives park visitors and residents a glimpse into the past, where the night sky can be observed and studied, like people did for thousands of years. Recently, Big Bend National Park has begun the process of totally eliminating forms of light pollution to help visitors experience the wonders of a night sky free from modern intrusion. The installation of LED and shielded lighting is one of the steps to help insure that Big Bend National Park continues to be the best example of primeval night skies available today and for future generations.

Safety



Sunset Drive in Big Bend National Park
NPS Photo/Mark Schuler

As you enjoy the splendor of this great wilderness area, make safety a priority. By giving forethought to your actions you can have a safe, exciting, and rewarding vacation in Big Bend National Park.

Zika virus

The Zika virus is a viral disease transmitted to people by infected mosquitoes (*Aedes* species, a non-native species introduced by humans). This information is compiled to help you prepare for your visit to national parks in at-risk areas, including the US Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico, as well as potentially at-risk areas (in Florida and the Pacific Islands, along the US-Mexico border, and in other areas where *Aedes* species mosquitoes have been introduced).

Zika Virus and the National Parks

Zika, a mosquito-borne virus, is a non-native disease spreading in multiple countries and territories in the Western Hemisphere. This virus has been linked with severe birth defects

and other complications. The mosquitoes that transmit the virus prefer to feed on humans and breed in containers and other non-natural habitats. Park visitors should be aware of the potential risk for Zika and take steps to protect themselves from mosquito bites.

<https://www.nps.gov/articles/zika-virus.htm>

Driving

- Drive within the speed limit, 45 mph maximum in the park, and watch for javelina, deer, and rabbits grazing along road shoulders, especially at night.
- Pull off the road to take pictures—do not stop or pause on roadways.
- Park roads have limited shoulders and some are steep and winding and require extra caution. The road to the Chisos Basin is not recommended for RVs over 24 feet or trailers over 20 feet.
- Backcountry roads required vehicles with good tires, including a spare at a minimum and a working jack; some roads require a high clearance or 4-wheel drive vehicle. Take extra water, food, and sleeping bags just in case. If your vehicle breaks down or gets stuck, stay with it. It is much easier for rangers to find a car on a road than a person walking through the desert.
- Share the road with bicyclists and pedestrians.
- Select a designated driver before drinking alcoholic beverages.

Fire

- Wood or ground fires are not permitted in the park.
- Exercise caution when using gas stoves, charcoal grills, or smoking cigarettes; restrictions may apply to the use of these heat sources during drought conditions.

Heat

- Carry plenty of water (at least one gallon per person, per day); springs are unreliable despite what maps indicate.
- Wear a hat, long pants, long-sleeved shirt, and sun screen when hiking.
- Avoid hiking during mid-day heat in summer.

Hiking

Exploring desert and mountain country on foot requires both mental and physical preparation. Trails vary from well maintained in the Chisos Mountains to primitive and barely visible in the desert. Plan hikes within your ability.

- Let someone know where you're going and when you expect to return.
- Take along a map and compass and know how to use them.
- Carry a flashlight, first aid kit, and signaling device (mirror and whistle).
- Avoid narrow canyons or dry washes; flash floods may occur during thunderstorms.
- Stay low and avoid ridges during lightning.
- If you get hurt or lost, stay in one place to conserve water and energy. Signal for help (using whistle or mirror). In remote areas, mark a large "X" on the ground that could be visible from the air.

Swimming

Hot weather makes the muddy Rio Grande look very inviting, but swimming is not recommended. If you do choose to swim, wear a life jacket and avoid alcohol.

- Water-borne micro-organisms and other waste materials can occur in the river and cause serious illness.
- The river can be hazardous, even in calm-looking water. Strong undercurrents, deep holes, and shallow areas with sharp rocks and large tree limbs are common.

Weather

Watch the weather. Winter storms and thunderstorms can move in quickly. Hypothermia and lightning have both taken lives here. Rain can cause flash floods many miles away, so even if the sky overhead is clear, be careful around creek beds and the Rio Grande during the rainy season.

Wildlife Encounters

Black bears, javelinas, coyotes and skunks frequent campgrounds and may be encountered on trails. Although they sometimes appear tame, all of the animals in the park are wild, and could pose a threat to your health and safety if you attempt to approach or feed them.

- Never feed wildlife.
- Store all food, coolers, cooking utensils, and toiletries in a hard-sided vehicle, preferably in the trunk of your car. Use available food storage lockers in campsites.
- Dispose of garbage properly. Throw garbage in the bear-proof dumpsters and trash cans provided.
- Watch children closely; never let them run ahead or lag behind.
- If you encounter a bear or lion, do not run, but back away to get out of range. If you feel threatened by a bear or lion, hold your ground, wave your arms, throw stones, and shout; never run. Keep groups together, look large.
- Venomous snakes, scorpions, spiders, and centipedes are active during warmer months. Inspect shoes, sleeping bags and bedding before use. Carry a flashlight at night. Pay attention to where you walk and place your hands. Consider wearing high boots or protective leggings while hiking.

Accessibility

We are continually working to upgrade facilities for accessibility, and to improve park access for all visitors. While not all facilities are fully accessible, park rangers are happy to assist any visitor with special needs



Several park trails are paved for accessibility.
NPS Photo/Reine Wonite

If you have comments or suggestions about facilities, services, or programs, please let us know. For more information, call Big Bend National Park at 432-477-2251 (voice) or 432-477-2370 (TDD) or write to: Superintendent, Big Bend National Park P.O. Box 129, Big Bend National Park, Texas 79834.

Visitor Centers

- **Panther Junction Visitor Center**
Has reserved parking and is accessible by ramp. The restrooms, exhibit area, bookstore, information desk, pay telephone, and drinking fountain are wheelchair-accessible. A large relief map of the park is available and can be touched. A TDD is available on request. Rangers are on duty to answer questions and assist visitors.
- **Chisos Basin Visitor Center**
Has reserved parking and is accessible by ramp. The exhibits, restrooms, and drinking fountain are wheelchair-accessible. Information is available in a variety of formats including audio and visual. Exhibits and audio information are available in English and Spanish. Interactive computer exhibits are closed-captioned.

- **Persimmon Gap Visitor Center**
Has reserved parking and is accessible by ramp. Exhibits, bookstore, restrooms, pay phone, and drinking fountain are wheelchair-accessible.
- **Rio Grande Village Visitor Center**
Has reserved parking and is accessible by ramp. The exhibit area, bookstore, audiovisual room, restrooms, and pay phone are designed for wheelchair-accessibility.
- **Castolon Visitor Center**
Has reserved parking and is accessible by ramp. The exhibits, bookstore, and restrooms are wheelchair-accessible.

Campgrounds

- **Cottonwood Campground** at Castolon has wheelchair-accessible vault toilets. Although campsites are not accessible, some are level and useable by people in wheelchairs.
- **Chisos Basin Campground** site #37 is fully accessible for wheelchair users. The adjoining restroom is also accessible.
- **Rio Grande Village Campground** site #14 is fully accessible. The adjoining restroom is also accessible.

During busy periods, designated accessible campsites are reserved for disabled campers until 6 p.m. If the campgrounds are full an accessible site may not be available.

Picnic Areas

- **Dugout Wells Picnic Area** has accessible tables and an accessible vault toilet.

Trails

- **Panther Path**, a short, self-guiding nature trail at Panther Junction, is rough, but level and useable by people in wheelchairs. An accompanying brochure explains Chihuahuan Desert plants.
- **Window View Trail**, a 0.3-mile self-guiding trail in the Chisos Basin is fully accessible to wheelchairs, and provides outstanding views of the window formation and the Chisos Mountains.
- **Rio Grande Village Nature Trail Boardwalk** (the first 0.25 mile of the trail), is wheelchair accessible. The trail is an excellent place for observing birds and aquatic plants and animals. A self-guiding booklet is available.

Vault Toilets

- Vault toilets at the Boquillas Canyon, Santa Elena Canyon, and Hot Springs trailhead areas are accessible, although rugged terrain precludes wheelchairs on the trails. The Santa Elena Canyon river take-out also has wheelchair-accessible vault toilets.

Programs

- **Rio Grande Village Amphitheater** is wheelchair-accessible. Rangers frequently present evening programs at that location in winter and spring.
- **Chisos Basin Amphitheater** is accessible by ramp, although some grades are steep due to rugged terrain. The amphitheater itself is designed for wheelchair use. Rangers present evening programs there on a periodic, basis year-round.
- **Panther Junction Theater** is fully accessible.
- **Panther Junction Community Room** is fully accessible for scheduled events.
- **Cottonwood Amphitheater** is wheelchair-accessible. Rangers occasionally present evening programs there in winter and spring.
- **Nature Walks** presented on the Window View Trail are accessible. Most other guided walks are not wheelchair-accessible due to rough terrain.

Check weekly activity schedules for information regarding the accessibility of other ranger-led activities.

Scenic Overlooks

- Most scenic overlooks and wayside exhibits are accessible to wheelchair users. Where possible, reserved parking is provided.

Concession Facilities

- **Chisos Mountains Lodge** gift shop and restaurant are wheelchair-accessible. Wheelchair accessible restrooms are available adjacent to the main lodge building. Some guest rooms are wheelchair-accessible, and some are equipped with visual fire alarms for hearing-impaired guests.
- **Rio Grande Village Store** is fully accessible, as are shower facilities and laundry. The restrooms are equipped with grab bars, but are not fully accessible.
- **Chisos Basin Store** and the historic **La Harmonia Store** at Castolon are both wheelchair-accessible.

Contact Forever Resorts at 432-477-2291 for more information about concession facilities.

Outfitters

The following rafting companies offer float trips for disabled visitors. Please contact them in advance.

- **Big Bend River Tours** 1-800-545-4240
- **Desert Sports** 1-888-989-6900
- **Far Flung Outdoor Center** 1-800-839-7238

The following aviation company offers flights over Big Bend National Park and can accommodate individuals with disabilities.

- **Rio Aviation Inc.** 1-432-557-9477

Access Passports

The **Access Pass** is a free lifetime entrance permit to all federal parks, monuments, and recreation areas. It also provides a 50% reduction of camping fees. The Access Pass is issued to United States residents who are permanently disabled. Access passes may be obtained at park service visitor centers or online.

History & Culture



Windows to the Past

NPS Photo/Cookie Ballou

"Histories never conclude; they just pause their prose. Their stories are, if they are truthful, untidy affairs, resistant to windings-up and sortings-out. They beat raggedly on into the future...." Simon Schama

While Big Bend is famous for its natural resources and recreational opportunities, the park is also rich in cultural history. Native peoples lived in and/or passed through this area for thousands of years. Their presence is evidenced by pictographs and archeological sites. In more recent history (the last 500 years) Texas has been claimed by six different nations!

The Big Bend has been a home to people for many centuries, but knowledge of the Rio Grande among non-Indians dates back less than 150 years. Spanish people crossed the Rio Grande in the 16th and 17th centuries searching for gold, silver, and fertile land. Comanche Indians crossed the river in the 19th century, traveling to and from Mexico with their raiding parties.

Mexican settlers began farming on both banks of the river's floodplain around 1900. Anglo-Americans joined in the farming after 1920, when boundary unrest ended. Cotton and food crops were grown around Castolon and what is now Rio Grande Village, even after the park was established.

Today, you can drive along portions of the Comanche Trail, the same route Comanche warriors once traveled on raids into Mexico, or you can visit the La Harmonia Store at Castolon where locals (and visitors) have shopped for eighty years.

From archeological sites dating back nearly 10,000 years, to ranches and mining operations from the Twentieth Century, Big Bend can be a great place to "discover" history.

Archaeology & Big Bend

The Science of Archaeology

Archaeology is defined as the study of the remains of the past culture of a people. Archeologists recover such things as samples of soil, pollen, charcoal, feces, chipped rock debris, and artifacts and then analyze these samples for evidence of food gathering and hunting technology, food processing, diet, and many other facets of subsistence activity. They use technical methods which include controlled excavation, extensive site recording through written field notes, drawings, maps, and photographs. These methods are designed to gain a maximum amount of information with a minimum amount of site destruction. Through careful scientific study, archeologists try to recover the pieces of the past that help us better understand how mankind has learned, developed, and succeeded or failed. As citizens of this country and this world, we can appreciate the story of mankind's past. Perhaps the lessons we learn from the past will help us be better stewards of our fragile planet, now and in the future. By protecting the material cultural remains here in Big Bend National Park, we help to preserve this heritage for future generations to enjoy.

Archaeological Study at Big Bend National Park

There still is much to learn about the prehistory of Big Bend National Park. A complete understanding of man's past is totally dependent upon the scientific study of the sites and artifacts that have survived the ravages of time. Archeological research in Big Bend National Park is scanty, and an intensive survey of the total park has never been done. Two early archeological surveys (1936–37 and 1966–67) sampled only a portion of the park. However, the two surveys recorded a total of 628 sites and the latter survey revealed that the park probably contains more than 5,000 archeological sites. In 2002, the National Park Service made a quantitative estimate based upon more recent data which suggests that there are nearly 26,000 sites in the park.

Preservation of Archaeological Resources

At Big Bend National Park, only two prehistoric archeological sites are presently considered "public"—the Hot Springs pictograph site and the Chimneys. As research is completed on other archeological sites, they may also be opened to the public. There are eight National Register historic sites or districts in Big Bend National Park, including the Castolon Historic District, Hot Springs Historic District, the Mariscal Mining District, the Homer Wilson Ranch Site, Rancho Estelle, and Luna's Jacal. Thousands of archeological sites within the park hold remnants of the material remains of 10,000 years of Native American occupation of the Big Bend. When properly studied, these sites can provide very valuable information about past lifeways. Many of the park's archeological and historical sites have been vandalized and valuable information has been destroyed or removed by artifact collectors. Casual artifact collecting by the park visitor has

resulted in the loss and destruction of much evidence of the past, information which could otherwise be obtained through scientific investigation. Archeological sites are protected by the Archeological Resources Protection Act of 1979. Under this act, people who disturb these cultural resources can be fined up to \$10,000 and sentenced to up to six months in prison for their first offense. Information about sites is exempt from the Public Freedom of Information Act. Clearly, citizens and lawmakers view our cultural heritage as valuable, irreplaceable, and worthy of protection and preservation.

Late Paleo-Indian Period (ca. 8000–6500 B.C.)

At the end of the last ice age, the climate was much cooler and wetter, and woodlands covered much of the Big Bend. Since about 9000 B.C. the climate has gradually become warmer and drier, and there has been a gradual influx of heat- and drought-adapted plants. Evidence of Paleo-Indian presence has been recorded in the park but no studies have been done which explain local human adaptation during this period. The earliest inhabitants lived a nomadic hunting and gathering lifestyle that was adapted to the cooler and wetter climate that prevailed in that age. Throughout the Paleo-Indian period, people hunted large game animals as their primary source of materials for food, clothing, and shelter.

Archaic Period (ca. 6500 B.C.–A.D. 1000)

After the last glacial episode, woodlands gave way to arid-adapted plant communities at lower elevations. The slowly changing climate caused a decline in the numbers of large game animals, primarily bison. Native American groups of the Archaic Period adapted to the changing climate by developing a hunting and gathering lifestyle so successful that it remained virtually unchanged for about 7500 years. The Archaic Period people hunted smaller game with a spear that was propelled by a spear-thrower, called an atlatl. This period is characterized by a strong dependence on plant foods, and a more structured social organization. People learned skillful ways to exploit the environment and developed a rich material culture that involved the intensive use of available plants and animals. A higher density of late Archaic sites indicates a more efficient adaptation and larger, denser population. An expansion of the Jornada Mogollon culture from southeastern New Mexico into extreme West Texas occurred at the close of the Late Archaic.

Late Prehistoric Period (ca. A.D. 1000–1535)

By 1000 A.D. the native people of the Big Bend had come under the influence of the Jornada Mogollon, with its ceramics, agriculture, and sedentary lifestyle. During the Late Prehistoric, Indians of the Big Bend began using the bow and arrow, and groups northwest of the area were producing pottery. Agricultural villages existed near present-day Presidio, Texas, and horticulture or simple agriculture was practiced by Indian groups in the area that is now the park. In most areas to the east, the Late Archaic hunting and gathering lifeway persisted into the Historic Period. The period is characterized by increased interregional trading.

The Historic Era (1535 A.D.–present)

During the early Historic Period several Indian groups were recorded as inhabiting the Big Bend. The Chisos Indians were a loosely organized group of nomadic hunters and gatherers who probably practiced limited agriculture. The name Chiso (Chizo) originally referred to one band (also known as the Cautiome or Taquitatome) but the Spaniards extended it to include at least six closely associated bands. Their origin is not known but they were associated with the Concho speaking Indians of northeastern Chihuahua and northwestern Coahuila. Their language group is a variation of Uto-Aztecan, a language whose speakers ranged from central Mexico to the Great Basin of the U.S. and includes the Aztec, Toltec, and the modern Hopi. The Jumano were a nomadic people who traveled and traded throughout western Texas and southeastern New Mexico but some historic records indicate they were enemies of the Chisos. Around the beginning of the 18th century (1700 A.D.), the Mescalero Apaches began to invade the Big Bend region, eventually displacing or absorbing the Chisos Indians. The last aboriginal group to use the Big

Bend was the Comanche who passed through along the Great Comanche Trail on their way to and from periodic raids into the Mexican interior. These raids continued until the mid-1800s.

As you explore Big Bend National Park, there is a good chance that the sites and artifacts you see have never been recorded or studied. Please help the park protect these important resources by leaving them as you find them, and by reporting what you see to a park ranger. *Remember, the removal of any cultural or natural object, or the disturbance of these objects from their natural state, is illegal in all national parks. So, please, take only photographs, leave only footprints.*

What Trash Can Tell Us



Rusted Cans NPS Photo/Tom Alex



Rusted Soda Cans
NPS Photo/Tom Alex

Trash Can Determine Dates

In February, 2001, some well-meaning visitors staying in a backcountry roadside campsite found some piles of rusty cans and old bottles near their campsite. They decided to clean up the “mess” and brought in six large garbage bags full of “trash” and deposited it with the rangers at Rio Grande Village. The fact that this historic trash dump, located near a ruin on a historic farming site, contained Cantrell & Cochrane cone top soft drink cans dating to a very narrow time period between 1953 and 1955, enabled us to assign an age to the occupation of that house.

The first experiments in canning soft drinks took place in 1938. This was done by Clicquot Club Company of Millis, Massachusetts. Ginger Ale ate through the can, and this experiment was given up. Canned soda was attempted again in 1950 by Pepsi Cola Company, but the cans exploded and Pepsi abandoned canning soda for a time.

It was 1953 before soda was successfully canned by Cantrell and Cochrane (C&C) of New York, but by 1954, most of the soft drink industry was canning their product. The first canned soda was placed in cone top cans. By the end of 1954, nearly all soda companies had changed to flat top cans. Royal Crown started canning soda in 1954 and by 1960 it was the largest canner of soft drinks; Pepsi and 7-Up followed in the late 1950s.

Coca Cola began to experiment with cans in 1955, and was canning for military use in 1956. They got into canning in a large way in 1959-1960 when Coke was sold nationwide in flat top cans. In the early 1970s the first all-aluminum soft drink cans were produced.

Trash Can Determine Use

These are typical of containers made during the late 1880s. Cans from this time period were handmade and the seams were soldered by hand, producing a thick, uneven solder joint. The cartridge case on the left is a .45–70 military cartridge case with the manufacturing date of 1880 stamped on the base. These pieces of “trash” are important artifacts that help identify the age of a site, as well as provide clues to the use of the site.

In this case, the sparse number of items at the location indicated short term use of the site, the food containers and a few scattered horseshoe nails and other military artifacts suggested that it is most likely an overnight camp by Buffalo Soldiers who patrolled the area in the 1880s.



Rusted Cans
NPS Photo/Tom Alex

When Does Trash Become History?

Each year, park visitors bring in things that they think are important and want to “show a ranger” what they found. Each year, some well-intentioned visitor will “clean up a trash pile” and deposit it on our doorstep. The question continues to arise whether or not piles of rusty tin cans and broken bottles are important artifacts.

First, these items really are government property. Even the stuff in our landfill is government property. The Code of Federal regulations is quite specific about protecting government property and park resources in general from disturbance of any kind. In that sense, they are important and our law enforcement responsibility is to deal with each case independently according to its severity.



Rusted Truck Frame
NPS Photo/Sharon Collyer

Context Matters

Archaeological and historic sites contain artifacts that tell a story of how people used that location on the landscape. The association of an artifact to a location, or context, is directly linked with the human activities on the site. Knowing the context of the object is crucial to determining what human activities took place on the site, why this object was used there, and how it ended up in the place and condition in which it is found. When the inhabitants are no longer around to ask, the only way to determine and interpret the questions of “what, why, and how” lies in finding and recording the context, as well as in recovering the objects. In fact, the context is more important than the object itself.

Only someone trained in identifying the age of items in a trash pile is really able to distinguish between something significant and something that belongs in the landfill. I have looked over numerous piles of cans, bottles, broken pottery, wire and miscellaneous metal over the past twenty plus years and have yet to find something in the pile that can’t tell me how old the stuff is, or more importantly, learn something about the people who lived on the site from the things they left behind. The importance is the context from which the objects came. If we lose the context, then we probably do have just a pile of trash.

When a visitor proudly brings in an object to “show a ranger,” it places a burden of responsibility upon us to properly care for that object. First, its context must be recorded. It must be photographed, cleaned, stabilized, and curated. A museum accession record must be made of it that includes noting the context from which was obtained. It must be labeled with the accession number and the number of the site from which it came. If the site has not been documented, someone has to go there and record the site, map it and identify its important features, and those records must then be placed in the park files. This involves



Rusted Can Lid
NPS Photo/Sharon Collyer

much time by several people. This simple object brought in by a visitor, or an employee, can cost the park anywhere between \$50 and \$150 just to get it into the museum collection. If it requires recording a new site, the cost can literally run thousands of dollars. So, it is important that people understand the complexity created by the simple act of bringing in an artifact.

These objects and sites can best be enjoyed now and by future generations by protecting and preserving them in the true museum, which is the park itself. The National Park Service is compelled by law and policy to preserve sites and objects in situ, that is, in their original location and condition. So, please take photographs and record their location, and then leave them alone.

Cultural History of the Big Bend

Ecological Background

To the casual visitor, the Big Bend area of Texas presents a face of harsh desolation, austere panoramas, open expanses of cactus and scrub brush broken by rugged mountains, towering pinnacles and deeply etched canyons. However, at the end of the last ice age, the climate was much cooler and wetter, and a widespread woodlands covered much of the Big Bend. Since about 9000 B.C. the climate has gradually become warmer and drier, and there has been a gradual influx of heat and drought adapted plants.

The Prehistoric Era (9000 B.C.–1535. A.D.)

The idea of the Big Bend as "despoblado," or unpopulated, is difficult to dispel. The fact remains that Big Bend has been more or less continually inhabited by humans for thousands of years. The archeological record reveals that earlier inhabitants developed a nomadic hunting and gathering life style so successful that it remained virtually unchanged for several thousand years. Human occupation of the Big Bend during this prehistoric area can be generally divided into five periods:

- Paleo-Indian (ca. 8000–6500 B.C.)
- Early Archaic (ca. 6500–3000 B.C.)
- Middle Archaic (ca. 3000–500 B.C.)
- Early Archaic (ca. 6500–3000 B.C.)
- Middle Archaic (ca. 3000–500 B.C.)
- Late Archaic (ca. 500 B.C.–1000 A.D.)
- Late Prehistoric (ca. 1000–1535 A.D.)



Pictographs
NPS Photo/Big Bend National Park

Throughout the Paleo-Indian period the inhabitants of the Big Bend depended upon large game hunting as their primary source of food, and materials for clothing and shelter. As the slowly changing climate caused a reduction in the numbers of large game animals, primarily bison, the Indian groups of the Archaic Periods adapted by utilizing a combination of hunting smaller game with a type of spear thrower called an atlatl, and gathering and processing plants for food, clothing, and shelter. These highly efficient methods maintained a relatively stable lifeway for about 7500 years. Not much is known about these early Indian groups. It is not known by what name these early Indians were called, or what they called themselves. That information did not survive into the historic period. By the Late Prehistoric period (1000 A.D.) the native people of the Big Bend had come under the influence of agricultural groups to the northwest. Agricultural villages existed near present day Presidio, Texas, and it is suspected that some limited agriculture was practiced by Indian groups in the area of the park. During the Late Prehistoric, Indians of the Big Bend began to use the bow and arrow, and groups northwest of the park were using pottery.

The Historic Era (1535 A.D.–Present)

Native Americans (1535–1850 A.D.)

During the early historic period several Indian groups were recorded as inhabiting the Big Bend. The Chisos Indians were a loosely organized group of nomadic hunters and gathers who probably practiced limited agricultural on a seasonal basis. The origin of the Chisos Indians is not known. Linguistically, they were associated with the Conchos Indians of northern Chihuahua and northwestern Coahuila. Their language group spoke a variation of Uto-Aztecan, a language whose speakers ranged from central Mexico to the Great Basin of the U.S. The Jumano was a nomadic group that travelled and traded throughout west Texas and southeastern New Mexico but some historic records indicate that they were enemies of the Chisos. Around the beginning of the 18th century, the Mescalero Apaches of the 18th century, the Mescalero Apaches began to invade the Big Bend region and displaced the Chisos Indians. The last Indian group to use the Big Bend was the Comanches who passed through the park along the Great Comanche Trail on their way to and from periodic raids into the Mexican interior. These raids continued until the mid-1800s.



Lipan Apache Warrior
NPS Photo/Big Bend National Park

The Spanish (1535–1850 A.D.)

The Historic Era begins roughly 1535 A.D. with the first Spanish Explorations into this portion of North America. The expedition of Alvar Nunez Cabeza de Vaca passed near the Big Bend, and was followed by other expeditions in the search for gold and silver, farm and ranch land, and Indian slaves. In an attempt to protect the northern frontier of Mexico, a line of "presidios," or forts, was established along the Rio Grande in the late 1700's. The Presidio de San Vicente was built near present San Vicente, Coahuila, and the Presidio de San Carlos was built near present day Manuel Benavides, Chihuahua, both in Mexico. These presidios were soon abandoned, however, because of financial difficulties and because they could not effectively stop Indian intrusions into Mexico.



Children at San Vicente Ruins, 1930s
NPS Photo/Big Bend National Park

Mexicans and Anglos (1850–Present)

Very little study has been made of the Mexican occupation of the Big Bend following the abandonment of the Presidios. In 1805 the Mexican settlement called Altares existed 30 miles south of the Rio Grande. Mexican families lived in the area when Anglo settlers began moving in during the latter half of the 1800's.

Following the war between Mexico and the United States, which ended in 1849, military surveys were made of the uncharted land of the Big Bend. Military forts and outposts were established across Trans Pecos Texas to protect migrating settlers from the



Gilberto Luna
NPS Photo/Big Bend National Park

Indians. Around 1870, ranchers began to migrate into the Big Bend, and by 1900, sheep, goat, and cattle ranches occupied a majority of the landscape. The delicate desert environment, however, was soon overgrazed.

In the early 1900's, the discovery of valuable mineral deposits brought more settlers who worked in the mines or supported the mines by farming or by cutting timber for use in the mines and smelters. Communities sprang up around the mines; development of Boquillas and Terlingua directly resulted from mining operations. During this period, the Rio Grande flood plain was settled by farmers. Settlements developed with names like Terlingua Abajo, San Vicente, La Coyota, and Castolon. These were often no more than clusters of families living and farming in the same area, and they were successful only to the degree that the land was able to support them.

In the 1930's many people who loved the Big Bend country saw that it was a land of unique contrast and beauty that was worth preserving for future generations. The State of Texas passed legislation to acquire land in the area which was to become the Texas Canyons State Park. In 1935, the Federal Government passed legislation that would enable the acquisition of the land for a national park. The State of Texas deeded the land that they had acquired to the Federal government, and on June 12, 1944, Big Bend National Park became a reality.

The park is dotted with old buildings and ruins, the physical remains of those past settlements. Thousands of archeological sites hold remnants of the material remains of 10,000 years of Indian occupation of the Big Bend. By visiting these sites and ruins, you can glimpse a view of early life in this seemingly hostile environment. When properly studied, these sites can provide valuable information which improves our understanding of past lifeways. Many of these cultural resources are unique in that they are one-of-a-kind or because they only occur in the park area.

Remember: All cultural and natural resources and objects in Big Bend National Park are protected by federal law. Collecting any type of artifacts is illegal.

Our cultural heritage is valuable, irreplaceable, and worthy of protection and preservation. As citizens of this country and this world, we can appreciate the story of mankind's past. Hopefully, the lessons we learn from the past can help us create a better tomorrow. By protecting the material cultural remains here in the park, we help to preserve this heritage for future generations.

Big Bend Ranch State Park – 432-358-4444

Welcome to the Other Side of Nowhere!

Big Bend Ranch State Park offers outdoor recreation for the truly adventurous. This remote park features rugged mountains, steep canyons, amazing views, unparalleled night skies, and solitude in a high desert setting. The park stretches along the Rio Grande in far west Texas, on the U.S.-Mexico border.



Entrance Fees

- Adult (Peak): \$5 Daily
- Adult (Non-peak): \$3 Daily
- Child 12 Years and Under: Free

Hours

Open daily.

Office Hours

Sauceda Ranger Station: 8 a.m. – 6 p.m. daily

Note: The Saucedo Ranger Station closes on Christmas (Dec. 25); emergency contact information will be posted.

Obtain park information and permits for day use and camping in person at the Saucedo Ranger Station, Fort Leaton State Historic Site and Barton Warnock Visitor Center.

Note: The Saucedo Ranger Station is 27 miles of rugged, dirt road from FM 170. This is the only way in or out of the interior of the park. Motor homes and trailers are not recommended.

El Despoblado means “The Unpopulated place.” It’s a name long used to describe the northern Chihuahuan Desert, including the Big Bend Region, which may imply a sense of emptiness. Yet Big Bend Ranch State Park is far from empty the Park offers 500 square miles of unrivaled geology, spectacular vistas and night skies, diverse plant and animal life, and evidence of over 10,000 years of human occupation.

WATER: THE DESERT’S WEALTH:

Water, the desert’s life-giving wealth, softens and tames el despoblado to make it habitable, even welcoming. An important water source, the Rio Grande carves a verdant ribbon through the harsh grandeur of the Chihuahuan Desert along the park’s southern boundary. Other perennial watercourses and abundant springs provide unexpected oases in an otherwise dry environment.

Vegetation throughout the park exists in a moisture dependent mosaic – sometimes lush, more often sparse. Native plants range from arid-adapted cacti to water loving cottonwoods. Animals exhibit similar variety, from water-dependent beavers along the river to desert specialists like the black-throated sparrow.

GEOLOGY: WINDOW INTO THE PAST:

The geology of Big Bend Ranch State Park reminds us of profound changes over the past 600 million years of Earth's history – changes born of water and fire.

A deep ocean, the Ouachita Basin, covered the Big Bend and much of the southeastern United States some 570 million years ago, long before the age of dinosaurs. One may see remnants of the Ouachita Mountains in parts of Arkansas, Oklahoma and West Texas, including The Solitario at Big Bend Ranch State Park. The ancient Ouachitas formed through the tremendous forces of plate tectonics, which folded-up layered sedimentary rock from the ocean floor like a rug being pushed against a wall. Water continued to shape the region as a shallow inland sea spread from the Gulf of Mexico to Alaska. Erosion and uplift worked together to expose the limestone rock of this ancient sea floor in the Contrabando lowlands and the upended “flatirons” that form the rim of The Solitario.

The Solitario is a feature born of fire. Between 36 and 35 million years ago, magma from deep within the Earth pushed upward in three pulses to create a blister-like bulge nearly 10 miles across near the park's eastern boundary. Following erosion and a complex series of eruptions, the uplifted sedimentary rock and the underlying lava chamber collapsed to form the almost circular basin-like feature known today as the Solitario. Volcanism remained at work in the region. As you pass the dark peaks and mesas between Redford and Lajitas or along the Saucedo road, imagine glowing cone-like vents and gaping fissures that once spewed red-hot ash and molten rock. Lava from these eruptions eventually hardened into the rhyolite and basalt rock that form the Bofecillos Mountains, whose many cracks and fissures trap groundwater and account for the region's numerous springs – life-giving oases in the desert.

HUMAN HISTORY:

Diverse people have lived among the canyons, mountains and valleys of Big Bend Ranch State Park for centuries, typically near water sources. The materials and structures they left behind tell stories of triumph and hardship in this sometimes hospitable but often relentless land.

Hundreds of prehistoric camps, cooking areas and rock art sites dot Big Bend Ranch. Grinding stones, bedrock mortars, flint tools and burned rock middens indicate that the hunter-gatherers living here used every natural resource available to survive in the demanding environment. The wide variety of prehistoric pictographs (rock paintings) and a few petroglyphs (rock etchings or carvings) document the amazing diversity of these peoples.

A handful of traders and freighters such as Ben Leaton and Milton Faver were the first Anglo-Americans to settle the area in the mid-1800s. By the 1870s, small family ranches began to spring up, raising much of their own food and herding sheep and goats. Those who survived the drought of 1892 were soon thriving. Park visitors today can see remains of the Crawford-Smith, McGuirk, Reza and Madrid houses among others. Early ranchers supplemented their incomes in innovative ways. A wax factory and several camps remain in Fresno and Contrabando Canyons, where thousands of pounds of wax were extracted from candelilla plants and sold as waterproofing for World War I army tents. Nearby, the Whit-Roy Mine produced flasks of mercury from cinnabar ore into the 1960s.

The Bogel brothers – Gus, Gallie, Graves and Edward – began consolidating small ranches in the 1910s until they amassed over 38,000 acres. The buildings and corrals of their headquarters, Saucita, endure today at the heart of Big Bend Ranch State Park where the area is now known as Saucedo. But subsistence was one thing, and profit another. The ranching boom ended when only two inches of rain fell in 1933. Precious water sources evaporated and desert grasslands withered. Hit hard by drought, the Bogels sold the ranch in 1934. Mannie and Edwin Fowlkes risked limited funds to purchase the Bogel property and additional land. Conditions were so dry once again during the 1950s that the Fowlkes fed their cattle ground sotol, an abundant desert succulent, to keep them alive.

When Len G. “Tuffy” McCormick purchased the ranch in 1958, it was described as half the size of Rhode Island, and listed as one of the 15 largest in the United States. Subsequent owner Robert O. Anderson and his Diamond A Cattle Company partnered with Walter Mischer to increase the size of the ranch before selling the property to Texas Parks and Wildlife Department in 1988.

ENJOY YOUR VISIT:

Today, people visit Big Bend Ranch State Park for many reasons. Some come to glimpse the region’s vibrant past. Others come to commune with nature. Over 300 species of birds alone have been recorded here, and other forms of wildlife abound – from lizards to javelina to mule deer. Many more come to test themselves. Camping, hiking, mountain biking, horseback riding, river rafting and backcountry driving in this wild and remote land can push the limits of human endurance and fortitude. Still others come for the peace, quiet and solitude that Big Bend Ranch State Park can offer like no other place. Whatever your motivation, the park awaits you.

Things to Do

Visitors can hike, mountain-bike, backpack, paddle, ride horses or explore by vehicle (the park has two- and four-wheel-drive roads). This is Texas’ biggest state park, so there’s a lot to explore!

The park has 238 miles of multiuse trails (for hiking, biking and horseback riding). Visitors can explore 70 miles of unmaintained dirt roads in high-clearance four-wheel-drive vehicles. The Rio Grande/Rio Bravo area offers great day-use access. Visitors can float, fish and hike, or drive the scenic Camino del Rio (FM 170). Each February, the park helps host the Chihuahuan Desert Bike Fest. Visit our Activities page to learn more.

Chihuahuan Desert Bike Fest

Feb. 16-18, 2017

3 whole days of gettin’ down and dirty!



The Fun, the Glory and the Excitement of the 6th Chihuahuan Desert Bike Fest hosted over 500 riders, led more than a dozen guided rides, filled every local hotel room and raised over \$4,700 with raffle tickets and the registration donations alone!!

The Chihuahuan Desert Bike Fest benefits the Big Bend Trails Alliance, a local, non-profit organization that helps create and maintain these famous West Texas trails.

Pick up backpacking, camping and river-use permits at the following places. You can also purchase maps and hunting and fishing licenses, as well as find information about the Big Bend region.

- On the east side, near Lajitas: [Barton Warnock Visitor Center](#)
- On the west side, near Presidio: [Fort Leaton State Historic Site](#)
- In the park’s interior: Saucedo Ranger Station.

What to do in one day, three days, or one week!

Make the most of your visit

Some people have limited time to explore and sample the wonders of Big Bend Ranch State Park. The following is offered as a brief guide. Remember that orientation requirements and park entrance fees apply.

One Day

1. From Presidio headed eastward, stop at Fort Leaton State Historic Site for orientation and to visit the exhibits.

Enter the park at the Botella Junction entry station. Continue on, stopping frequently to take in the scenery and read the interpretive waysides along the 20+ mile route. Stop at Cuevas Amarillas to check out the prehistoric rock art and bedrock mortars (grinding holes). Once at Saucedo Ranger Station, peruse the interpretive exhibits on the park's ranching heritage. Enjoy a picnic lunch under a shade tree outside the bunkhouse, then drive to the Solitario Overlook a few miles further. There you can actually see the exterior of the park's signature geologic formation.

2. If a short hike appeals to you, take either the Cinco Tinajas or Ojito Adentro trail as you are exiting the park.

Both trailheads are immediately adjacent to the Saucedo road. The Ojito Adentro Trail traverses desert scrub into moist riparian woodland. This oasis-like patch of green is a particularly good spot to bird-watch. The Cinco Tinajas Trail near Saucedo is well marked; elevation change is only 200 feet and the vistas of the inner reaches of the park are breathtaking. Tinajas are naturally formed "bowls" that hold water when many other sources are dry.

3. If you are coming from Study Butte/Terlingua, stop at Barton Warnock Environmental Education Center in Lajitas for orientation and to peruse the interpretive exhibit on the region's natural and cultural history as well as the desert gardens.

Stop in the park store for a wide range of informative books, maps and pamphlets. Then, continue westward on the River Road, stopping at the many pull-outs to enjoy a picnic lunch, revel in the view and check out the wayside exhibits. Near the east end of the drive, turn northward to Saucedo Ranger Station as described above, or continue on to Fort Leaton.

Three Days

1. The Rancherías Loop Trail is a two-night, three-day camping and hiking experience.

Be sure to receive orientation at Barton Warnock Center or Fort Leaton and secure a permit. The elevation changes are dramatic, but for hearty souls the hike is well worth it.

2. Receive orientation, secure your permit and choose a campsite that suits your interests and your vehicle type.

Many campsites such as Los Ojitos and Fresno Vista are accessible by two-wheel drive vehicles. Others, such as Las Burras and Yedra 1 & 2, require a 4x4 vehicle with high clearance. Always check with a ranger on road conditions. Take all your food, water and other supplies and truly get away from it all for three days of hiking and bird-watching, or simply kick back and enjoy the solitude.

3. Combine a campout with hiking and biking on the Horsetrap Hike and Bike Trail with short excursions to the interior of the Solitario in your 4x4.

Parts of Horsetrap offer dramatic views of the interior of the park including the Cienega Mountains and Fresno Peak. And, of course, the Solitario is unforgettable. Many park trails are mountain bike accessible. Check with a ranger for options.

One Week

With an entire week, we suggest you develop your own customized itinerary from the numerous options available.

Many people spend several days camping, hiking, biking and/or horseback riding, then go to the River Road for a relaxed day excursion that might include a raft, canoe or kayak trip on the Rio Grande. You have many choices. The world is yours at Big Bend Ranch State Park!

Know before you go

Multi-Use Trails

Some of the park's trails are suitable for hiking only. Other trails are available for mountain bikers and equestrians also. Speak with a park ranger for details and use options. Remember to take plenty of water, regardless of your activity!

Biking

When biking, always wear a helmet and protective clothing. Know your ability and limits.

Horseback Riding

All pack-and-saddle stock users must obtain a backcountry use permit, whether for day use or overnight. Equestrians must bring their own weed-free horse feed. All horses must have documentation of a current Coggins test.

River Access

The Rio Grande provides opportunities for rafting, kayaking, canoeing and free bank fishing. Several river access points are found along F.M. 170. Colorado Canyon includes Class II and Class III rapids — not considered dangerous under normal flow conditions.

Outfitters

Local outfitters can provide guides and assist you with equipment needs. Potential services may include nature/birding hikes, mountain biking tours, horseback rides, river trips and campouts.

Policies on Dogs at Big Bend Ranch State Park

The following rules apply to all Texas Parks & Wildlife Department sites.

- Dogs must always be on a leash no longer than 6 feet.
- Dogs are not allowed in any buildings (that includes the Saucedo Ranch House and Bunkhouse).
- You must pick up your dog's feces with a bag immediately and place in a trash can.
- Never leave your dog unattended.
- Do not allow your dog to approach wildlife.
- More information is available in the Texas State Parks Rules and Regulations.

The following rules apply to Big Bend Ranch State Park.

- Dogs are only allowed to be ¼ mile from campsites or designated roads, and only on the Closed Canyon Trail and the Hoodoos Trail on FM 170.
- Dogs are not allowed on any other hiking trails, in the backcountry, or more than ¼ mile from campsites or designated roads.

Note: Under the Americans with Disabilities Act, these policies do not apply to persons relying on service dogs.

Why the Rules?

Dogs have an effect on the wildlife of our park.

- The presence of dogs at Big Bend Ranch State Park puts stress on wildlife, whether from direct (physical contact) or indirect (contact with feces, etc.) interaction.
- The presence of dogs can make wildlife feel threatened, increasing the chances of a wild animal attacking a dog or human.
- Dogs can pass and receive diseases and parasites to and from wildlife through direct and indirect interactions. Diseases and parasites include fleas, ticks, worms, parvovirus, and many more.

Dogs have an effect on other visitors.

- While you may love your dog, not everybody does. The park is for the enjoyment of all visitors. The presence of dogs can inhibit some people's enjoyment.
- Dogs scare birds, interfering with bird-watching (many birders come to this park).
- Dog feces in the park can result in an unpleasant smell around campsites, along the roadside, and from the bottom of shoes.

One last thing to consider:

Many state parks in Texas do allow dogs in the backcountry and on hiking trails. However, Big Bend Ranch State Park has stricter dog policies than other parks.

First, Big Bend Ranch State Park is a vast and wild area unlike any other state park. We strive to maintain the beauty, solitude, and natural feeling of the wilderness. Our dog policy helps us to continue to offer a park experience unlike any other.

The second reason for our policies is your dog's comfort and safety. Big Bend Ranch State Park is a remote park located in a desert climate. With summer temperatures averaging over 100° F, dry air, and rough, rocky terrain, park conditions can be very difficult on dogs. Many dogs live in air-conditioned houses or a different climate than that of the Chihuahuan Desert. Thus, the heat can be hard on them. Many dogs are used to walking on sidewalks, manicured lawns, and in maintained city parks. Walking on our trails can be painful and wearing on a dog's foot pads.

You love your dog, but the best way to love your dog is to leave him at home when you come to Big Bend Ranch State Park.

Ranger Programs

Park rangers lead tours throughout the year. These include hikes and four-wheel-drive trips to learn about archeology, geology and nature. Rangers also lead mountain-biking and photography tours. Call the park at least seven days before your visit to request a tour.

Ranger Tours

Call the park at least seven days before your visit to book one of the tours listed below. Tour times depend on park interpreter availability.

Hiking and Interpretive Tours: Park rangers will introduce you to the unique Chihuahuan Desert plants and animals and the history and geology of the area. Along the way, you will take in some beautiful park vistas. These one- to three-hour tours are free.

Mountain-Biking Tour: Discover some of the most rugged mountain-biking country in west Texas on this free one- to four-hour guided ride. Bring your own bike or rent one from a local outfitter.

4x4 Tour of Archeology, Geology and Nature: This 4x4 road adventure can be tailored to your interests. A ranger will take you to remote and scenic areas of the park. This tour (in our Suburban) can accommodate up to six people and costs \$150.

Hiking and Mountain Biking

Trails provide the easiest access to many areas of Big Bend Ranch State Park. Our trails showcase nature, history and dramatic scenery, while capturing the spirit of this land. People of all ages, abilities and interests can find suitable trails.

Many trails are available for hiking, mountain-biking and horseback riding. Some trails are only for hiking because of rough terrain. Park maps show both routes and trails; routes are not suitable for bikes and horses.

Most hiking trails are primitive, with rock cairns and few signs. Experienced hikers can explore cross country. Always use a map when hiking at Big Bend Ranch State Park.

Two short trails near the Saucedo Ranger Station offer differing views of the park.

The one-mile **Ojito Adentro Trail** crosses desert scrub into an oasis-like area with great wildlife viewing. The $\frac{3}{4}$ -mile **Cinco Tinajas Trail** offers views into a deep canyon with a series of tinajas, or rock pools that hold water after rains. Other trailheads lie along FM 170.

The **Puerta Chilicote Trailhead** (see Fresno West Rim map) provides access to a system of trails in the wild and rugged areas of the Bofecillos Highlands and Fresno Canyon. Visitors can reach the trailhead in a two-wheel-drive car. From the trailhead:

- A five-mile (there and back) trail accesses the west rim of Fresno Canyon. Hikers will enjoy great views of Fresno Canyon and the Solitario “flatirons.”
- The 3.2-mile Cerro Chilicote Loop Trail makes a great day hike.
- More adventurous hikers can explore a series of connecting trails and loops dropping into Fresno Canyon, Arroyo Primero and lower Arroyo de los Mexicanos.

Are you interested in the park’s magnificent geology and capable of a strenuous self-guided day hike with some canyoneering? Then try this hike: **In and Out of Time:** Geologic Hike of Los Portales Shutup and the Righthand Shutup, El Solitario. Pick up the brochure and map at the Saucedo Ranger Station.

Due to the rugged nature of the route, which includes a 750’ elevation gain/loss, a backcountry permit is required. You will need a 4WD high-clearance vehicle to get to the trailhead in Fresno Canyon.

Refer to park maps or speak to a ranger when choosing a trail for your activity. Always carry a map when hiking and biking in the park. For information on guided hike or bike trips, see the Ranger Tours section above or visit the Outfitters page.

Carry plenty of water and wear appropriate protective clothing. When biking, always wear a helmet and carry two spare tubes. Most importantly, have fun!

Chihuahuan Desert Bike Fest: Mountain bikers descend on the park in February for this annual bike fest. Staff members lead three days of guided trail rides. In 2014, over 470 riders participated. The park's Fresno-Sauceda Loop has been designated an "Epic" ride by the International Mountain Bicycling Association. The 54-mile loop ride is the only Epic ride in Texas, and one of two in the southwestern United States.

For more information on hiking and biking at Big Bend Ranch State Park:

- Big Bend Ranch Biking Guide
- Contrabando Multiuse Trail System brochure
- Cinco Tinajas Trail and Leyva Escondido Loop Trail (PDF)
- Saucedo Nature Trail (PDF)
- Encino Trail (PDF)
- Horsetrap Trail (PDF)
- Exploration Map of Bofecillos Highlands and Cienega & Alamito Lowlands
- Exploration Map of Fresno Canyon
- Topographic Map of Fresno West Rim
- Walking Guide to the Saucedo Historic District
- Article on the Fresno-Sauceda Loop, designated an "Epic" ride by the International Mountain Bicycling Association

Horseback Riding

Exploring Big Bend Ranch State Park on horseback is a true "wild west" experience. Horses can be ridden in most areas of the park. Mules are allowed, also. Some campsites have pens. Agua Adentro Pens is the best base for a horseback trip.



4x4 Touring

Visitors with high-clearance four-wheel-drive vehicles can tackle nearly 70 miles of unmaintained dirt roads in the park. These roads were used for fence building, water line construction, livestock wrangling and mineral prospecting and mining.

River Access

For a day trip, visit the Rio Grande/Rio Bravo corridor to raft, canoe, picnic and fish. Several access points lie along FM 170. Colorado Canyon includes Class II and III rapids. This section of the river is not dangerous except during floods.

Raft trips can be arranged through local outfitters.

Nature Viewing

Most visitors come to the park for the scenery. Exposed geology is part of the scenery here in Big Bend country. Geology ultimately determines where and how the region's plants, animals and humans live. As you soak up the dramatic scenery, remember that you are looking far back into geologic time. To learn more, visit the Nature page.

Birding: More than 300 bird species live in the park's various Chihuahuan Desert habitats: grasslands, desert scrub, canyons, and riparian woodlands and thickets.

- For more information on birding in the park, visit the Bird-watching section of our Nature page.
- Birds of Big Bend Ranch State Park and Vicinity

Stargazing

Far West Texas offers some of the darkest skies in the continental United States. The park offers occasional stargazing programs.

Guide Service Providers

Commercial outfitters lead guided tours and rent sports gear. They rent kayaks, canoes and mountain bikes, as well as other camping equipment. Outfitters lead horseback rides, river rafting trips, 4x4 tours, mountain bike tours, camp-outs, nature and birding hikes, and art and photography classes.

Are you uneasy about tackling this rugged park on your own? Do you want to try a new activity, like mountain-biking? An outfitter may be able to help.

Nature

With its dramatic geology and diverse plants and animals, Big Bend Ranch State Park is a fascinating place to study nature.

Geology

Big Bend Ranch State Park is located in far west Texas in the high desert setting of the northern Chihuahuan Desert. Summers are hot, winters are mild, not much rain falls, and the scenery is magnificent.

The landscape varies from river lowlands to deep canyons, from high plateaus to steep-sided mountains. The elevation ranges from about 2,300 feet along the Rio Grande up to 5,135 feet at Oso Mountain. Geologic changes born of water and fire and taking place over millions of years created this dramatic terrain.



Four of the major events that mark the geological development of North America converge in the park.

You can see evidence of two of the events at the Solitario, a dome in the northeast corner of the park. The Solitario provides this window back in time because it uplifted around 35 million years ago. Subsequent erosion exposed the older rocks in its core.

The oldest rocks began as ocean sediment over 500 million years ago. They were folded and faulted into ancient mountains around 300 million years ago, in the Appalachian/Ouachita/Marathon event. Over time, the mountains eroded. Another ocean covered the area with sediment around 100 million years ago. This in turn was uplifted and deformed by about 50 million years ago in the Rocky Mountains event.

Volcanoes erupted throughout western North America between 47 and 18 million years ago. This was known as the Trans-Pecos Volcanic event. Extensive lava flows and abundant volcanic ash built up the Bofecillos Mountains in the high central part of the park 27 million years ago.

Finally, the Rio Grande flows through a series of elongated basins with long, continuous faults. This area began forming 25 million years ago (Basin and Range event) and the process continues today. The Rio Grande curves along the southern boundary of the park and offers a long, verdant corridor in the desert environment.

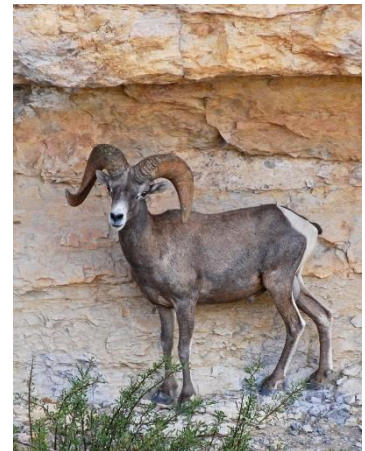
All creeks in Big Bend Ranch State Park drain into the Rio Grande. None of the creeks, including Alamito, Cienega and Fresno, flow year-round. Dry arroyos dominate the desert landscape. Creeks, arroyos and river can and do flash flood.

The park's visitor centers and ranger station sell reference guides on the geology of the park. Park rangers also lead geology tours.

Animals

A wide variety of mammals, snakes and birds make their home in the high desert environment of Big Bend Ranch State Park. Forty-eight mammal species have been spotted in the park, including 16 species of bats. At least 30 types of snakes occur in the park. More than 300 species of birds have been recorded.

Mountain lions live in the park, while black bears wander through occasionally. Mule deer and collared peccary or javelina are common. Lizards are abundant, especially during warm weather. Grey foxes, coyotes, kangaroo rats, jackrabbits and desert cottontails are frequently seen.



Bighorn Sheep: Native bighorn sheep vanished from the rugged mountains of the Trans-Pecos by the 1960s. Decades of work by TPWD, conservation groups, private landowners and others led to the reintroduction of bighorn sheep to the area. Bighorns now range across the Bofecillos Mountains within the park. The best place to see them is at La Cuesta.

Bird-watching

The Chihuahuan Desert offers lots of opportunities for an adventurous birder. Habitats vary from grasslands, desert scrub and canyons, to riparian woodlands and thickets. Cottonwood, willow and hackberry woodlands and shrub thickets usually surround large springs. Birders can find the greatest variety and largest number of birds near springs and along streams.

Ojito Adentro is one of the park's premier birding spots. From the parking area, visitors cross through desert scrub into riparian woodland. Listen for the song of the Bell's Vireo, commonly heard in the thickets along arroyos and in riparian areas.



Vermilion Flycatcher

In the spring and summer, watch for Zone-Tailed Hawks, Vermilion Flycatchers, Summer Tanagers, Blue Grosbeaks and Varied Buntings. Canyon, Bewick's, Cactus and Rock wrens live here year-round, and a wide variety of sparrows reside here in winter.

During migration (late March through mid-May and late August through mid-October), visitors will see flycatchers, warblers and tanagers. While migration in west Texas is less spectacular than farther east, birders can still be surprised. Painted Redstarts and a variety of eastern warblers have passed through the park in recent years.

Walking along a dry arroyo in well-developed desert scrub will reveal different birds. Say's Phoebe; Verdin, Curve-billed and Crissal thrashers; and Black-tailed Gnatcatcher join more Bell's Vireos in this habitat. An easily accessible arroyo lies along the west side of the Saucedo Headquarters complex.

Scaled Quail and Black-throated Sparrows are two of the most abundant birds, and can be encountered almost anywhere.

Plants

The northern Chihuahuan Desert hosts a wide variety of plant species. The natural plant communities fall into four major types:

- Riparian zones extend around springs, along drainages and in the Rio Grande corridor.
- Mixed desert scrub consists of creosote, ocotillo, cacti and lechuguilla (a Chihuahuan Desert indicator species).
- Desert grassland.
- Open juniper woodlands occur only at the highest elevations of the Chihuahuan Desert, but do not occur in the park.

The mixed desert scrub is by far the most widespread plant community. It has largely replaced the once-dominant desert grasslands. Riparian zones (areas along rivers and creeks) are very important here, as they are home to a wide variety of species. Look for cottonwood trees in these areas; they are especially colorful in the fall.

Elevation and past land use determine what plants grow in the park. Overgrazing and browsing damaged many of the plant communities here on what used to be a working ranch. All but a few livestock animals have been removed and many plant communities are recovering.

Open desert scrub dominates the uplands of the park. The scrub is made up primarily of whitethorn acacia, mariola and creosote. Dense woody scrub lines arroyos and the bases of cliffs. Open desert grassland appears in areas with deeper soil and less livestock damage.

Barton Warnock Visitor Center -- 432-424-3327

Entrance Fees

- Adult (Peak): \$5 Daily
- Adult (Non-peak): \$3 Daily
- Child 12 Years and Under: Free

Hours

Open daily from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.



Things to Do

Barton Warnock Visitor Center serves as the eastern visitor center for Big Bend Ranch State Park and is located near Lajitas. Permits for backpacking and camping (no hookups) at Big Bend Ranch State Park can be obtained at Barton Warnock or at Fort Leaton State Historic Site, the western visitor center for the park. Call (512) 389-8919 to make camping reservations. Visitors can also purchase river-use permits, licenses, and information about the Big Bend region.

The new, renovated Interpretive Center, "Una Tierra - One Land," is the fruit of an international partnership effort of state and national park experts in Texas and the Mexican states of Coahuila and Chihuahua. The vast majority of information, including captions and text, is presented in both English and Spanish.

The Center presents an archeological, historical, and natural history profile of the Big Bend region. It houses a book store and gift shop. The book store includes guides for area interest, as well as books on the history and the natural environment of the Big Bend Region. The gift shop has a variety of T-shirts, postcards, and souvenirs.

Ranger Programs

Take a self-guided tour through the Interpretive Center and two-acre desert garden. Discover how the history, geology and landscape have shaped the cultural heritage of the region; how humans, animals and plants have adapted to survive the harsh conditions of the Chihuahuan Desert; how plants have adapted to the harsh conditions of the Chihuahuan Desert and how the first inhabitants of Big Bend used these plants for food, shelter and medicine. Guided tours for groups may be arranged.

Natural Features

The Center is in the Trans-Pecos Vegetation Area. It has a two-acre botanical garden that allows visitors to walk among the characteristic plants of the Chihuahuan Desert.

History

Barton Warnock Environmental Education Center consists of 99.9 acres located in Brewster County. The land was acquired in 1990 and was already open to the public.

The Center was built in 1982 by the Lajitas Foundation as the Lajitas Museum Desert Gardens. Texas Parks and Wildlife purchased it in October 1990 and renamed the center after Dr. Barton Warnock, a well-respected botanist, specializing in the Big Bend region. Dr. Warnock passed away June 9, 1998. The Center serves as the eastern entrance gateway to Big Bend Ranch State Park and interprets 570 million years of geological history and the five biological landscapes of the Chihuahuan Desert, a region better known to most West Texas travelers as the Big Bend.

Fort Leaton State Historic Site – 432-229-3613

Entrance Fees

- Adult - Peak Season: \$5 Daily
- Adult - Non-Peak: \$3 Daily
- Child 12 Years and Under: Free

Hours

Open daily.
8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
Busy Season
September through April



Welcome to one of the largest and finest historic adobe structures in Texas! Fort Leaton State Historic Site provides a glimpse of life at a fortified trading post on the US – Mexico Border beginning in the turbulent mid-1800s. The site conveys a larger story as well – that of the virtual parade of people and cultures that have long inhabited the region known as La Junta De Los Rios, OH, the tales this site could tell...

Fort Leaton State Historic Site is day-use only and offers picnicking areas, a nature trail, guided tours, plus exhibits on the area's history from late prehistoric times through the present. The site also hosts several special events throughout the year and serves as the venue for many community activities.

THE EARLY DAYS

The story of Fort Leaton begins in Chihuahua City, Mexico. There, Juana Pedrasa met Ben Leaton sometime between 1833 and 1840. In 1848 the couple and their three children moved to the La Junta District on the Rio Grande, where Pedrasa owned land. They purchased additional acreage and fortified existing adobe structures into the square-shaped compound known today as Fort Leaton, which served as a home, trading post on the Chihuahua Trail, and private fortification. The Leaton family and their visitors—explorers, soldiers, traders, freighters, native Americans and Anglo settlers alike—sought protection here against Native American raids and attacks by borderland outlaws.

A handful of journal entries provide a glimpse of life at Fort Leaton in its early days. In 1848, 70 men led by John Coffee Hays traveled from San Antonio to the Big Bend area on a mapping expedition. Today that trip would take about seven hours, but in 1848 it took two months! Imagine how welcome the relative safety and comfort of Fort Leaton must have seemed after such an arduous journey. The expedition purchased horses, mules and other supplies at the fort.

The following year, Lt. William H.C. Whiting and party arrived at Fort Leaton while exploring a military route between San Antonio and Santa Fe. By this time Leaton owned two slaves, employed eight to 10 workers and maintained extensive farming operations. Whiting referred to the fort as “one of the most important places on the Rio Grande” due to its position as the lone defensive outpost and supply station along a 450-mile stretch of river. He also commented on the exorbitant prices being charged. Although Leaton was widely known as a scoundrel, Whiting praised his hospitality. Leaton treated the party to an enormous meal including stewed chicken with chilies, roasted turkey, tortillas, frijoles, coffee and homemade peach brandy.

MURDER AND MAYHEM

The story of Fort Leaton soon took a series of violent turns. Following Ben Leaton's death in 1851, Juana Pedrasa married Edward Hall and continued the fort's operation as a trading post, albeit unsuccessfully.

Fort Leaton passed to John Burgess during foreclosure proceedings in 1862, but the Halls refused to leave. Ten years later an angry and frustrated Burgess was indicted for Hall's murder. Despite a second slaying—this time of Burgess by a vengeful William Leaton—the family continued the trading business through 1884. The Burgesses went on to occupy the deteriorating structure until about 1927. Following Fort Leaton's acquisition by the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department in 1967, restoration work was completed in 1978.

LA JUNTA DE LOS RIOS

The same qualities that drew Ben Leaton and Juana Pedrasa to the area have attracted countless others over the centuries. The region known as La Junta de Los Rios, named for the nearby confluence of the Rio Conchos and Rio Grande, contributes two all-important resources: water and fertile floodplain soils.

As long as 800 years ago, Native American farmers raising corn, beans and squash lived here in permanent villages while conducting extensive trade. Over time La Junta witnessed a flow of diverse cultures and individuals from all walks of life as the region passed through governance by four countries: Spain, Mexico, the Republic of Texas and, finally, the United States. Due to its rich history and relative isolation, the region continues to maintain a unique cultural identity today.

Things to Do

Fort Leaton serves as the western Visitor Center for Big Bend Ranch State Park. Permits for backpacking and camping (no hookups) at Big Bend Ranch State Park can be obtained at Fort Leaton or the Barton Warnock Visitor Center, on the eastern edge of the park near Lajitas. Visitors can also purchase river-use permits, licenses, and information about the Big Bend region.

The park is day use only and offers picnicking areas, guided tours, plus exhibits on the history from 15th century, natural history, and archaeological history of the area. The site serves for historical study activities.

Ranger Programs

Tours: The park offers a variety of educational opportunities. There are guided tours available and self-guided tours of the fort and its exhibits on the history of the fort, as well as the natural and archaeological history of the area.

Nature

Situated in the Chihuahuan Desert, plants range from arid-adapted cacti to water-loving cottonwoods. Animals exhibit similar variety, from water-dependent beavers along the river to desert specialists like the Black-throated Sparrow.

History

Fort Leaton State Historic Site, consisting of 23.4 acres, five of which are the site of a pioneer trading post, is located in Presidio County. The park was acquired Dec. 8, 1967, by deed from a private owner and was opened to the public in 1978.

In 1848, Ben Leaton built a fortified adobe trading post known as Fort Leaton. He dominated border trade with the Apache and Comanche Indians before he died in 1851. In 1936, the Texas Centennial Commission placed a marker at the site

Elephant Mountain Wildlife Management Area

Phone: (432) 364-2228

Dates Open: Year round except: *except entire area closed for special hunts*

Driving Tour is open May 1 through August 30, annually.

Please call in advance.

Description

Elephant Mountain WMA consists of 23,147 acres within the Trans-Pecos Ecological Region of west Texas. The WMA is located along the east side of SH 118, approximately 26 miles south of Alpine, in Brewster County. Elephant Mountain WMA was acquired through private donation in 1985 for the purpose of conservation and development of desert bighorn and large game animals, wildlife-oriented research, and other compatible recreational uses including public hunting. Desert bighorn have been established on the area. Other wildlife species present include desert mule deer, pronghorn antelope, coyotes, scaled quail, rattlesnakes, whiptail lizards, and spadefoot toads.

The most prominent feature of the area is Elephant Mountain (6,225 feet above sea level) which extends from the northern to southern property boundaries. The large flat-topped mountain of igneous origin rises nearly 2,000 feet above the surrounding table land. The top of the mountain covers over 2,200 acres and is not open to the public to prevent disturbance to the desert bighorn herd. The Del Norte Mountains which are of sedimentary origin form the eastern property boundary. Elevations within the Del Norte range vary from 4,800 to 5,300 feet above sea level. The remainder of the area may be described as level to nearly level, with elevations ranging from 4,200 to 4,800 feet. The property is drained by Calamity Creek, located to the west of Elephant Mountain, and Chalk Draw, located to the east of Elephant Mountain.

Vegetation on Elephant Mountain WMA lies within a transition zone between the arid Chihuahuan Desert scrub to the south and high desert grasslands to the north. There are five major habitat types present on the WMA.

These include:

- Desert Scrub
- Desert Grassland
- Riparian Zones
- Juniper-pinyon-Oak Woodlands
- Deciduous Canyon Woodlands.

Much of the vegetation on Elephant Mountain WMA has been modified to some degree, due to grazing, lack of a natural fire regime, periods of drought, periods of intense rainfall and in some areas mechanical disturbance from agricultural practices. These phenomena have resulted in a somewhat changed vegetative state than what might naturally have occurred.

Elephant Mountain WMA is designated as a wildlife research and demonstration area. As such, the area will be managed and operated in accordance with the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department Public Lands Policy.

Areas of this type are dedicated to the following prioritized activities:

1. wildlife management
2. research
3. demonstration
4. appropriate public use

Primary goals for the management of Elephant Mountain WMA, in prioritized order, are:

1. To develop, manage, and restore wildlife habitats and populations of indigenous wildlife species.
2. To provide a site where research of wildlife populations and habitats can be conducted under controlled situations.
3. To provide for public hunting and appreciative use of wildlife in a manner compatible with the resource.
4. To provide areas to demonstrate habitat development and wildlife management practices to landowners and other interested groups.
5. To provide a natural environment and facilities for use by educational groups, naturalists, and other professional investigators.
6. To provide a source of desert bighorn brood-stock for transplanting to depleted habitats.

Please note:

- **Registration required at self-registration station.**
- Bring your own drinking water.
- A composting toilet is located at the campgrounds.
- The wildlife viewing area is wheelchair accessible.
- CAUTION: Watch for rattlesnakes.

General Access

High clearance or 4-wheel drive vehicles are recommended as the roads can be quite primitive. Camping is permitted within the designated primitive campground only. Access to the slopes and top of Elephant Mountain is not allowed for the protection of the desert bighorn herd.

Permits are not required for the driving tour only.

Permits Required

- Visitors 17 years of age and older must possess an Annual Public Hunting (APH) Permit or Limited Public Use (LPU) Permit, except for driving tour participants. Hunting and general use is restricted to portions of the WMA which are identified as being open by information posted at the Information/Registration Station.

Hunting

Wildlife Management Areas (WMAs) have rules and regulations for hunting not required on private property. Hunters must possess a valid **hunting license**, the appropriate tags and stamps, as well as the proper public hunting permit. Permits include: Annual Public Hunting Permit (APH), computer drawn Special Permits, and the Regular Permit, which allows daily small game hunting on some areas. Hunters 16 years of age and younger are not required to have a hunting permit, but must have a hunting license and be supervised by a licensed, permitted adult, 18 years of age or older. Hunters and non-hunters must wear hunter orange during daylight hours at any time when firearm hunting for any species is authorized on the unit (except turkeys, waterfowl, and dove).

Driving

The driving tour is open May 1 through August 31 (closed for Desert Bighorn sheep lambing season: January 1-April 30 and all hunting seasons.)

The driving tour starts at the self-registration station and crosses Calamity Creek almost immediately. After crossing the creek the driving tour turns south and traverses the desert scrub vegetative community along the western flank of Elephant Mountain. At the south end of Elephant Mountain, the driving tour turns northeast and continues to the Wildlife Viewing Site. Total distance, one-way is approximately seven miles. Visitors should use caution when driving due to the possibility of poor road conditions. Low clearance vehicles may not be suited for the driving tour road following periods of heavy rainfall. Wildlife species visitors can expect to see along the driving tour include desert mule deer, javelina, numerous bird species which vary depending upon the season, many lizard species during the warmer months, various species of snakes, and butterflies. At the Wildlife Viewing Site, visitors can scan the mountain slopes for views of desert bighorn. At a minimum, binoculars are a must, and spotting scopes are recommended. Morning is the best time to visit the Wildlife Viewing Site due to light conditions. The slopes of Elephant Mountain are closed to visitors to protect the desert bighorn herd.

Permits are not required for the driving tour or nature trail.

Hiking

Hiking is an enjoyable activity that is available in many of the Wildlife Management Areas of Texas. Since potable water is not available on many of the Wildlife Management Areas, it is a good idea to bring plenty of drinking water.

Elephant Mountain WMA does not have designated hiking trails but roadways can be used for hiking. The slopes and top of Elephant Mountain are closed to public access to protect the desert bighorn herd. Potable water is not available, so bring plenty of drinking water. All visitors should wear hunter orange during daylight hours during open hunting seasons for safety reasons.

Wildlife Viewing

Viewing wildlife is an enjoyable activity that is available in many of the Wildlife Management Areas of Texas.

A Wildlife Viewing Site is open May 1 through August 30 annually. The Elephant Mountain WMA driving tour leads to the Viewing Site. Total distance, one-way, is approximately seven miles. The Viewing Site contains interpretive panels and serves as a demonstration site for water collection, wildlife water sites, and wildlife friendly fencing. The roof of the Viewing Site collects rainwater which is held in an enclosed water tank. The water tank feeds a small wildlife water drinker which is accessible to many species of native wildlife. It is not uncommon to see various species of birds visit the water while one is sitting quietly under the shelter. The three-strand fence surrounding the Viewing Site allows native wildlife access to the water, while preventing cattle from using this drinker.

Visitors should use caution when driving to the Viewing Site due to the possibility of poor road conditions. Low clearance vehicles may not be suited for the driving tour road following periods of heavy rainfall. Wildlife species visitors can expect to see along the driving tour include desert mule deer, javelina, numerous bird species which vary depending upon the season, many lizard species during the warmer months, various species of snakes, and butterflies. At the Wildlife Viewing Site, visitors can scan the mountain slopes for views of desert bighorn. At a minimum, binoculars are a must, and spotting scopes are recommended. Morning is the best time to visit the Wildlife Viewing Site due to light conditions. The slopes of Elephant Mountain are closed to visitors to protect the desert bighorn herd.

Over 65 species of mammals, eight amphibian species, 40 species of reptiles, 160 species of birds, and 50 species of butterflies have been documented on the property.

Angell Expeditions – 432-229-3713

Big Bend River Tours, Bicycle Tours, and More

Our Big Bend River Tours let you experience Texas along the Rio Grande and International Border

Rafting in Big Bend National Park with Rio Grande River Outfitters

The Rio Grande River offers some great river rafting, canoe, and kayak trips. River trips will depend on water flow but when it's good, large rafts are lots of fun. When the water level is lower, canoe trips are great, and offer excitement. Call us to schedule to rafting trip in Big Bend National Park.



RIVER TRIPS – RAFT/CANOE/KAYAK

Floating the Rio Grande is the best seat in the house to see the wonders and diversity of the Big Bend. We have inflatable rafts, canoes and inflatable kayaks and can accommodate groups of 25-plus. For the Devil's River on that beautiful water.



Devil's River Guide

Ever heard of the Devil's River?

A hidden Texas gem with some of the most wonderful canoe and kayak waters in the Southwest. Call us to schedule. It's very limited

availability, but the trip you will always remember.

The Rio does not keep a constant level year-round, so be sure to check with us for forecast conditions. Some favorite river runs are not always feasible if the current is low, and some areas may have up to class III or IV rapids, perhaps a little too much excitement for some. The best river levels are in late summer and fall, but there are times during the remainder of the year when an unexpected surge can create perfect conditions for days or weeks.

Those with little experience will feel most comfortable either riding in one of our big oar rafts or piloting a 2-person inflatable kayak with a partner. The inflatable kayaks are easy to maneuver and very forgiving when bumping into boulders. Depending on the wind and river current little effort can be required, or considerable effort. Water shoes or TEVA style sandals are recommended, flip-flops get lost or stuck in the mud easily. Old tennis shoes are also good, or any pair of tennies that you don't mind having to clean up later. A big floppy hat to shade you from the sun is also recommended-keep the sunscreen off your forehead, it tends to run in the eyes when sweating.

Mountain Biking in Big Bend

Expert to beginner, Big Bend offers some of the best mountain biking in the United States. For beginners, there are lots and lots of roads and trails that are well maintained, but off the beaten path. For more experienced riders, there are trails that will challenge every skill level. Not too many places you can ride 50 miles and never see a paved road. We offer guided cycling tours and mountain bike tours in Big Bend, as well as rent bicycles.

Mountain Biking Tours in Big Bend

The 52-mile Epic Bike Trail Loop in Big Bend Ranch State Park has become the premier mountain biking route for serious off-road cycling enthusiasts. Angell Expeditions rents bikes, helmets and other gear for this, and also will guide new riders thru the course, along with interpretive talk on the history, geology, plants and wildlife.



Two Day Bike Tour

Plan 2 to 3 days to cycle this route. A support shuttle to carry camping gear, food, and bike supplies will be necessary. We can provide all of the above services and help plan your itinerary to make the journey safely and efficiently. This is a serious technical trail, but with huge amounts of payoff in excitement, scenery and remote desert beauty. Make sure you are in good physical shape and your bike skills are up to par. Smaller warm-up trails on the Epic can be ridden prior to the entire loop to test your skills. Watch the video to get a small taste of this life-changing experience!

Bikes For Rent in Big Bend

We have a selection of quality, well-maintained mountain bikes for rent at very reasonable daily rates. We also keep a small inventory of inner tubes and various tools, parts and accessories for sale. Our 4WD vehicles are equipped with bike racks, parts and tools for remote on-location repairs and assistance. Mountain boards are also available for rent.

HELMETS REQUIRED for all cycling/mountain boarding activities and can be rented or purchased for nominal fees.

We can take you to established, maintained mountain biking trails, old abandoned mining trails, maintained or primitive single and double track, or complete off road rugged terrain. Please be honest and realistic with your skill level and capabilities so we can help you pick routes that best accommodate you.

ATTIRE: For all activities we recommend long-sleeve shirts, sunglasses and a broad-brimmed hat unless activities require a helmet. Long pants are recommended on hikes and climbs to protect from brush and thorns, and spare socks are good to carry with for all activities. Shorts and/or a swimsuit are good to keep with if taking a refreshing dip in a desert spring or other water source is desired.

Driving Tours in Big Bend

Four-wheel drive vehicle tours down forgotten trails in the Chihuahuan desert around the Chinati Mountains, Big Bend National Park, and Big Bend Ranch State Park. We have Jeep tours and ATV tours, reaching country that otherwise takes days of walking.

Offroad Tours – 4WD in Big Bend

See More of Big Bend in an Offroad Tour in a Jeep or ATV

Big Bend has some of the prettiest roughest country in the U.S., but it's also been settled by miners and ranchers for centuries, and by Indian tribes for a few thousand years. There are lots of roads leading to unique and remote places, and the only way to get to them without spending days hiking or biking is by 4-wheel drive.

Off-road tours in Big Bend National Park, Big Bend Ranch State, and exclusive private ranches Angell Expeditions has guide service agreements with.



We carry satellite radios, we can tour you thru the backcountry with the top down or up and in cool comfort.

Some of the more popular rides we conduct in the State Park are Guale overlook, our mini version of the Grand Canyon, or the route to Chorro Vista, which terminates near Madrid Falls and Mexicano Falls. Both Madrid and Mexicano are beautiful oases in desert canyons, overlooks to both are a relatively short hike from the parking areas. To truly experience these hidden gems a strenuous, rugged hike is required, appx. 2 hrs. one way for either, but the payoff is worth it.

In the National Park the most popular drives are Old Ore road and the River Road. The River Road requires more time than Old Ore and is generally a rougher, bumpier ride. Old Ore has a short 20 min. hike one way to a unique site, Ernst Tinaja. The rock formations, colorations and geology that surround this deep pool of water are a sight to behold, basic skill levels are adequate for this hike. We also can take you to numerous areas with ancient Native American pictographs. Some of these are easily accessible but most require some strenuous hiking. We have many other routes and locations, too numerous to list all.

Basic lunch (Ham & Turkey sandwiches, fruit, chips, etc) can be provided for an additional fee or you can bring your own. Feel free to ask us what your interests are, we can tailor a Jeep tour that suits you and your group.

ATTIRE:

For all activities we recommend long-sleeve shirts, sunglasses and a broad-brimmed hat unless activities require a helmet. Long pants are recommended on hikes and climbs to protect from brush and thorns, and spare socks are good to carry with for all activities. Shorts and/or a swimsuit are good to keep with if taking a refreshing dip in a desert spring or another water source is desired.



Hiking Guides in Big Bend

If you enjoy the outdoors, and want to hike – either for the day, or for a week, we offer guided hiking in Big Bend. We handle the food, water, tents, navigation, and you enjoy some of the most beautiful country in the world. Hiking in Big Bend is best during the cooler season, and the desert and mountains are famous for warm days and cold nights.

Planning a Trip to Big Bend

Thanks for visiting our website, if you want to plan a trip to the Big Bend and hire us as a guide, please send us the dates you are interested in, how many in your group, where you are staying during your visit, and type of activity. We can also make recommendations on other activities, dining and lodging!

Current pricing:

All activities require a 2-person minimum, solo individuals can pay for price of 2 or if possible pay single rate and ride with other scheduled groups. See our [Rates Page](#) for raft trips, Jeep or ATV trips, Mountain Biking, Hiking, and more.

Type of watercraft used is dependent on river level, large rafts are only available on higher levels, generally late summer or early fall.

Lunches can be provided at modest cost or clients can bring their own lunches, anyone with a special diet is advised to bring their own food, as our grocers have limited food variety.

Another special canoe or kayak trip is the [Devil's River](#). Just beautiful.

Current Rates for Our Services

Thanks for visiting our website, if you want to plan a trip to the Big Bend and hire us as a guide, please send us the dates you are interested in, how many in your group, where you are staying during your visit, and type of activity. We can also make recommendations on other activities, dining and lodging!

Current pricing:

All activities require a 2-person minimum, solo individuals can pay for price of 2 or if possible pay single rate and ride with other scheduled groups. We specialize in adjusting our meetup times and locations to suit your schedule and lodging location, group discounts are available.

- Jeep tours: \$130 per person
- Guided Hikes: \$130 per person
- Combo Jeep and Hike: \$130 per person

Some locations we jeep/hike to are ancient Native American dwellings with pictographs, slot canyons, old mine ruins.

- Guided Mountain Biking: \$130 per person
- Canoe, Kayak or Rafting: \$140 per person
- Youth 12 and under: \$100 for all activities

Type of watercraft used is dependent on river level, large rafts are only available on higher levels, generally late summer or early fall.

Lunches can be provided for an additional \$15 per person (Ham and turkey sandwiches, fruit, chips, nuts, cookies, snacks, etc.) Clients are welcome to bring their own lunches, anyone with special diet is advised to bring their own food, as our grocers have limited food variety.

San Carlos, Mexico

Explore the safe and beautiful town of San Carlos, also known as Manuel Benavides, only one hour from Presidio, Texas. This quiet town has incredible history due to the prevalence of water that flows around the town, through canyons, over waterfalls and into near-by lakes.



La Gloria Bed and Breakfast offers deluxe accommodations and wonderful food for a very reasonable price, in the heart of this jewel in the desert.

Several day hikes or jeep tours are available to scenic venues. A short drive out of town leads to two man-made lakes, which offer picnic areas, swimming and fishing.

Hike to old mine ruins, ancient Indian camps or an abandoned 18th century Spanish Fort and step back in time.

If you have any questions regarding a visit to this charming town south of the border, please do not hesitate to contact us.

About Us

CHARLIE ANGELL'S STORY

In the summer of 2001, Charlie Angell received a phone call informing him that his father had passed away. Charlie's father had disappeared from his life at the age of 13, and thus it came as a surprise that his father's final residence was in the Big Bend region of Texas.

Upon Charlie's first visit to the area, to scatter his father's ashes and take possession of a house and several acres of desert in South Presidio county, Charlie knew he was completely head over heels in love with the rugged mountainous land, and immediately began to change his life and eventually make the move to Far West Texas.



Charlie Angell

During the next seven years, Charlie became a part-time resident of the Big Bend and aggressively hiked, mountain biked, camped, went off-roading in his Jeep, rafted the Rio Grande and read dozens of books about the area, knowing full well that this indeed was his calling.

In 2006, Charlie decided to wind down his life of fishing, sailing and boating the Florida Keys, Gulf Coast and Bahamas to begin the transition of establishing his expedition company in the Texas Big Bend.

In the fall of 2008, Charlie became a full-time resident and began conducting tours of the parks and private lands. His knowledge of the flora, fauna, landscape, geology and history of the region are extensive.

If you are passionate about your work it shows, and never a day goes by where Charlie doesn't smile at the sunrise, sunset and mountains, and knows one day he, like his father, will someday become one with the desert.

Take a journey with Angell Expeditions and experience the Big Bend desert region with someone who has a calling and a passion for the lifestyle that is equaled by no other, and learn about one of the last great untamed wildernesses in America.



Big Bend Overland Tours

One of the best ways to explore Big Bend National Park is with a knowledgeable guide. At Big Bend Overland Tours we offer an experienced guide to take you to breathtaking views of this unique National Park. Along the way you will have ample opportunity to explore geographic features, and learn about the history, flora and fauna of the Big Bend Area. We recommend you bring along binoculars, camera, extra batteries and memory cards/film, hat/sunscreen, sturdy shoes, and plenty of water. The guide carries a satellite phone, extra water, and is trained in first aid. The tours are conducted in a Ford Excursion 4-wheel Drive vehicle with air conditioning for your comfort.



***Give us a call to reserve your seat to see and experience Big Bend!
Phone: 432-517-8559 or 800-848-2363***

River Road Tour

Be one of the few people today to travel through one of the most remote, beautiful and historic areas in the park. The River Road runs along the southern end of the park between Castolon and Rio Grande Village. You will experience the Rio Grande River, diverse plant life, unusual rock formations, and fantastic desert views. You will see the Mariscal Mine ruins where mercury was produced and the Glenn Springs historic site, where a bandit raid occurred in 1916. A picnic lunch is included with this day-long 120 mile round trip tour.

10-12 hours/1-6 people

(Park entrance fee and taxes not included)

Hot Springs and Rio Grande Village Tour

Big Bend National Park is well known for the Rio Grande river that runs through it. The river allowed a refreshing oasis for the Native Americans and drew early settlers to its edges. The Hot Springs tour includes a 1-mile hike will take to the hot springs where you can bath in the hot springs and watch the river flow by you. Also, take in historical structures used as an old post office and hotel, Indian pictographs, and incredible views of Hot Spring Canyon and the Sierra del Carmen mountains in Mexico. You will also get to explore the wetlands at Rio Grande Village and you may get lucky and stop for ice cream at the Rio Grande Village store.

4 hours/1-6 people

(Park entrance fee and taxes not included)

Ernst Tinaja Tour (add on option - Old Ore Road)**

Explore one of the truly unique places in the park that requires an off road vehicle. Ernst Tinaja is a natural hole in the bedrock that is filled with water year round where animals drink. Walking to Ernst Tinaja (1-mile round trip) you are walking on and surrounded by walls of layered limestone of different colors (beige, yellow, gray, reddish-brown). On the drive enjoy the desert plants and views of the Chisos Mountains.

5 hours **/1-6 people

(Park entrance fee and taxes not included)

**Add on Option - Old Ore Road with Ernst Tinaja Tour can be turned into an all day tour to see all of Old Ore Road. The all day tour includes boxed lunches (sandwich, chips, cookies, water and fruit). Explore more of Big Bend National Park along a sparsely traveled dirt road. End the tour with view of giant Dagger Yucca at Dagger Flats.

All Day/1-6 people

(Park entrance fee and taxes not included)



Santa Elena Loop Tour

This tour begins at the Park's west entrance to Old Maverick Road. See the century-old Luna's Jacal and Terlingua Abajo settlements and view the immensely beautiful Santa Elena Canyon from the base of its 1,500 ft. high cliffs. Enjoy boxed lunches (sandwich, chips, cookies, water and fruit) at the Historic Castolon Store and then continue on to view the area's flora, fauna, geology and history at Sotol Vista and Sam Nail Ranch.

5 hours/1-6 people

(Park entrance fee and taxes not included)

Indian Head Springs and Moon Valley Tour

Walk back in time and envision this Native American camp site. Archeology carbon samples have dated this area in use over 7,000 years ago. View pictographs and the panoramic scenery. Explore the indigenous rock to engage the hidden wonders of the Chihuahuan Desert. Continue the trip to Moon Valley, the location selected by NASA in April 1964 to train Neil Armstrong on how to take a rock sample - he was going to need this skill during his moon landing!

5 hours/1-6 people

(No Park entrance fee needed)



Glenn Springs Road Tour (add on option - Black Gap/ Mariscal Mine)**

The tour will visit the remains of an historic town that was the site a bandit raid in 1916 and a candelilla wax factory . Explore the remains of an old army outpost used to defend the area against Poncho Villa. This area also features unique rock formations and a natural spring - you might even catch a glimpse of some birds and other wildlife at this popular watering hole.

5 hours/1-6 people

(Park entrance fee and taxes not included)

**Add on Option - Black Gap & Mariscal Mine with Glenn Springs Tour

Extend your Glenn Springs tour to include some of the most amazing (and difficult to get to) places in the park. Black Gap Road is the most rugged, primitive road in the park. So if you're up for an adventure, this tour is for you! The last stop is Mariscal Mine - a mercury mine that was operational until the 1920's and briefly reopened in the 40's before Big Bend became a National Park. The all day tour includes boxed lunches (sandwich, chips, cookies, water and fruit)

All Day/1-6 people (Park entrance fee and taxes not included)



Customized Tours are available upon request.

At your request we can customize a tour just for your group (1-5 people). You tell us where you want to go and we will do the rest. Tours can be inside Big Bend National Park, Terlingua area, and Big Bend Ranch State Park. Call for more information or ask at the front desk.

Prices vary depending on the location and time required.

Step-On Guide Service For Tour Groups

We will be delighted to provide a knowledgeable and friendly tour guide to step onto your bus for a tour in the Park or region. In order for us to provide you the best customized services please allow advance notice is required for this service.

Step-On Guide Service Available For Tour Groups - 1/2 day or full day (contact property for pricing).

Knowledgeable of the Big Bend region's history, geography, wildlife, and ecology

Boxed Lunches Available for Additional Fee with Advance Notice

Boxed Lunches

Boxed lunches are available to take on your tour. The lunches include turkey, ham, or peanut butter & jelly sandwich on whole wheat bread with an orange or apple, chips, bottled water and a cookie.

Please be sure to pre-order these lunches so that they are ready for your tour. You can also pick up snacks (juice, trail mix, candy bars, etc.) at the Chisos Basin Store.

Photos courtesy of DJ Sanders.



Welcome to Big Bend River Tours
The oldest river outfitter running the Rio Grande in the
Big Bend area of Texas!
800-545-4240

Big Bend River Tours is located on FM 170 West, just after the Highway 118 junction. Our hearts remain true to the area, as we prefer to operate ONLY in the Big Bend. We are centrally located near several motels, restaurants, stores and gas stations and only 3 miles from the western entrance to Big Bend National Park. We are the oldest full service outfitter, offering you journeys by canoe, raft, kayak, van or jeep, on foot, and with combination trips, on horse as well. We are open 9AM to 5 PM year round and offer trips daily.

Our guided rafting trips, canoe trips, guided hikes and backroad tours are structured to give you information about the region's history, geology, wildlife and plant life through the expertise of our knowledgeable guides. Combination trips include the union of either a river trip, guided hike, or backroads expedition. Horseback trips can be arranged through the local stables as combination trips as well. Private shuttles and equipment rentals can be reserved to provide a wider array of options for those who would rather "go it on their own".

Please note that the last twenty years in the Big Bend have been very dry. This creates a low water situation which sometimes eliminates the use of rafts. We have a fleet of Old Town canoes that we use during the low water periods. Our guides are expert instructors, so even novices can learn to canoe and enjoy one of our spectacular canyons. The water tends to be very mild and more lake-like with few rapids during lower water.

We are Open 365 days a year from 9am to 5pm.

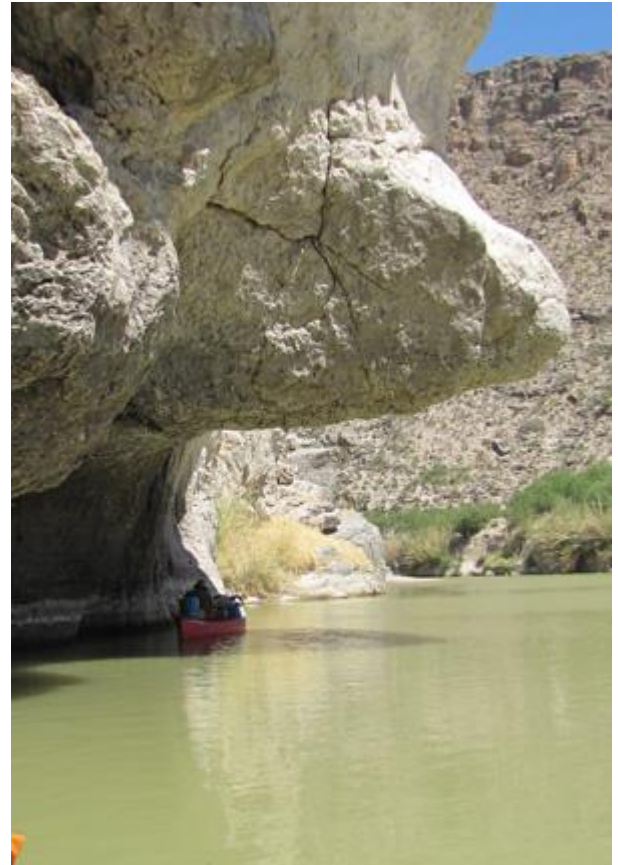
River Tours



Big Bend River Tours offers a wide variety of river trips down the Rio Grande. Covering over 250 miles, the river travels through many canyons of indescribable beauty and tranquility. The Rio Grande has something for everyone.

Our river guides are experienced and personable. They delight in sharing the area history, tales of the ancient dwellers, geology, flora, and fauna of the area. They enjoy sharing the special places of the Big Bend and they'll surely surprise you with the delicious river cuisine.

Our rafting trips require no skill from you as the guides do all the rowing. We offer a variety of river trips from 1/2 days to 21 days on the river. We provide all shuttling to and from the river, all equipment and



gear (excluding your personal sleeping bag, pad and tent), and food that will delight your taste buds. Every canyon offers up its own "personality" from the dramatic beauty of Santa Elena, the intimate splendor of Mariscal to the peace and solitude of the majestic Boquillas Canyon.

Half Day River Trip

Madera Grassy Banks

This itinerary is intended as an example only. Your trip may vary somewhat depending on weather and river conditions, your guide and your group's interests. Itineraries may be subject to change, please call our office for additional information.



Novice river runners, families with small children, and 80-year old youngsters will enjoy the rugged, peaceful beauty of Big Bend Ranch State Park on this mild half day float. The surrounding mountains with colorful layers of volcanic ash called Tuff, offer up a stark contrast to the dark lava and basalt formations on the banks of the river. As you gently float down the river, your guide will show you interesting desert plants and

point out unusual geologic formations, then serve you a light snack on this quiet section of the Rio Grande.

This trip is offered twice a day, 8:30 AM to 12:30 PM and 1:30 PM to 5:30 PM. During Summer months this trip is offered once a day from 9:00 AM to 1:00 PM.

During low water, this trip will be done in canoes. For more information, please contact our office at 1-800-545-4240.

LENGTH: 4 hours

PRICE: For prices see our [price list](#).



Note: Your trip fee includes guides, boats, life vests, a snack, drinking water, shuttles to and from the river, and all miscellaneous river gear. You are welcome to bring beer, or other canned beverages in a small cooler.

If you enjoy your trip, gratuities for your guide are always appreciated.

One Days River Trips

This itinerary is intended as an example only. Your trip may vary somewhat depending on weather and river conditions, your guide and your group's interests. Itineraries may be subject to change, please call our office for additional information.

Big Bend River Tours offers several spectacular canyons as a one-day trip. You may also choose to spend two or more nights out on the river to enjoy more of what each canyon has to offer.

Come and explore:



Santa Elena Canyon:

The Rio Grande River has carved through over 1500 feet of sheer limestone rock, creating Santa Elena Canyon, the most popular one or two-day river trip offered. Along the way are varied rapids that continue to provide added excitement. However, after entering the canyon, Rockslide Rapid, which can be a class IV rapid with adequate water levels, looms ahead. This rapid was created many years ago as the cliff face gave way choking the river with house-size boulders.

You may see the endangered Peregrine Falcon gliding on the thermals above the high canyon walls which can add to an already amazing trip. On extended trips more time is spent exploring other special places and watching some of the brightest stars in the West Texas sky.

LENGTH: 8 hour 1 day trip to 3+ days
PRICE: For prices see our [price list](#).

Santa Elena Canyon can be combined with Colorado Canyon to make a four-day trip. Call our office to find out more information on this 4-day combo Colorado & Santa Elena Canyon trip.



Colorado Canyon

Colorado Canyon is the only volcanically formed canyon on the river and its canyon walls are draped in desert vegetation. The ride through the canyon is filled with numerous Class I & II rapids. Panther Rapid, which can be a Class III rapid, might shower you with water as you near the end of your journey. Travel along the base of The Big Hill and listen to the multitude of birds in the riparian area along the riverbanks.

Time allowing, you may visit an old stone corral or a hidden Tinaja (Spanish for earthen jar) filled by a cold spring. This is a fun, beautiful trip, suitable for almost anyone.

LENGTH: 7-8 hour 1-day trip to 3+ days
PRICE: For prices see our [price list](#).

Colorado Canyon can be combined with Santa Elena Canyon to make a four-day trip. Call our office to find out more information on this 4-day combo Colorado & Santa Elena Canyon trip.



Hot Springs Canyon:

This trip floats through small scenic canyons on water that is calm with easy paddling and no rapids. The current carries our boats gently down the river. Stops along the way reveal hidden hot springs coming from the riverbank. Bird life is everywhere. Views of the magnificent Sierra del Carmens in Mexico come into view as you float down the river. View the ruins of the Hot Springs Motel and see the Indian pictographs and petroglyphs on the craggy cliffs. Then it's on to the hot springs for a good long soak. The waters of the hot springs were considered a cure all for many ailments in the early 1900's. People came from as far away as New York to "take the waters".

LENGTH: 7-8 hour 1-day trip
PRICE: For prices see our [price list](#).

Note: Your trip fee includes guides, boats, life vests, lunch, drinking water, shuttles to and from the river, and all miscellaneous river gear. You are welcome to bring sodas, beer, or other canned beverages in a small cooler.

Day Trips:

On all one day trips lunch is served with selections of deli meats, chips and dips, crackers and cookies, fruit, etc. For those who have special dietary needs, preferences, etc. arrangements can be offered to accommodate you. We provide a small waterproof bag to keep personal items including cameras, video cameras, etc.

If you enjoy your trip, gratuities for your guide are always appreciated.

Multi Day Trips

We can customize your trip to include extra days.

This itinerary is intended as an example only. Your trip may vary somewhat depending on weather and river conditions, your guide and your group's interests. Itineraries may be subject to change, please call our office for additional information.

Overnight Trips:

We provide waterproof bags for all your personal items. If you do not have a sleeping bag, sleeping pad or tent, you can rent them from us for \$10 each plus tax per trip. All your meals are included, from lunch on the first day, all meals in between and ending with lunch on the last day. Our exquisite dinners can include steak, lasagna, fajitas or enchiladas and always include wine and a dazzling dessert consisting of cheesecake, freshly made Dutch oven cakes or cobblers. Sit back and gaze at the amazing scenery around you while your guides do the work. Then, brightly shining, the stars come out, leaving you to gaze at the brightest stars in Texas in awe.

Overnight River Packing List

Sleeping Bag and a good pad.

Personal Tent

Pillow (optional)

Clothes (Please keep these to a minimum)

Pants or Shorts - 2 pair, one to keep wet & one for night (no denim material please)

Shirts - 1 long sleeve and 2 short sleeve

Underwear and Socks

Shoes - 2 pair (River sandals or quick drying sneakers for the river and another pair of sneakers or hiking boots for evening)

Sweater and/or Light jacket

Hat or sun visor (the wider the brim, the more it protects)

Swimsuit

Raingear

Sunglasses with eye strap

Water bottle

Flashlight with extra batteries

Camera with extra batteries

Musical instruments in hard cases (Bring at your own risk)

Toilet Kit

Toothbrush & toothpaste

Brush & Comb

Washcloth & Towel

Soap (Biodegradable)

Shampoo (Biodegradable)
 Personal Medication
 Ditty Bag
 Sunscreen (Waterproof 10-50 level protection)
 Lotion & Lip balm
 Insect Repellent

For Cool Weather Trips:

Bring thermal underwear, flannel or wool shirt, wool pants, wool cap & warm gloves, a WARM sleeping bag, and a good parka type jacket. Optional items include: waterproof booties, wet-suit bottoms and rubberized shoes or boots.

Winter weather is unpredictable! You may have warm days, so wear clothes that you can layer on and off. And throw in the swimsuit – you never know!

Assemble each person's river gear in separate large trash bags. If it won't fit in a large trash bag, you have packed too much! We will supply you with a large waterproof bag for sleeping bag and clothing. We also provide one waterproof bag for cameras and other small items for each two people on the trip. If you have any questions, feel free to call us. Thank you for choosing Big Bend River Tours!

Four to six days on the river is a relaxing, easy-paced journey. Sit back and enjoy yourself amongst the canyons, listen to the various bird song or photograph some of the most spectacular scenery to be found in the Southwest. Come and explore:

Colorado thru Santa Elena Canyon:

This trip combines two wonderful, yet distinctly different canyons. Colorado Canyon has multicolored volcanic rock formations with colorful cacti and flowers growing from the canyon walls. Once out of Colorado Canyon we enter another small canyon called Dark Canyon that lies below "Big Hill". Continuing on, you'll pass through the Madera and Grassy Banks area and past the Lajitas Resort on the way to the majestic Santa Elena Canyon. Enjoy the view of the mountains in the background as you leisurely float down the river to Entrance Rapid and the beginning of Santa Elena Canyon.

Sheer majestic walls, beauty and quiet grandeur, you'll find Santa Elena Canyon is incomparable. Its canyon walls reach skyward over 1500 feet above you. Santa Elena offers several class I and II rapids and Rockslide Rapid which can be a class IV rapid if there is adequate water levels. Low or high water, Rockslide will make your heart pound faster as you slide between house sized boulders in the maze created by a massive rock fall. Santa Elena is the most popular canyon trip on the Rio Grande.

LENGTH: 4 - 5 days

PRICE: For prices see our [price list](#).

Mariscal* thru Boquillas Canyon:

Mysterious and intimate, Mariscal Canyon is the most remote canyon within Big Bend National Park. 1800-foot limestone spired walls rise majestically above you. Splash through the Rock Pile and Tight Squeeze rapids. The trip continues through San Vicente Canyon and on to Rio Grande Village. Along the way enjoy picturesque scenery and perhaps a stop at the hot springs for a soak in the "healing waters". As we continue the journey past Rio Grande Village and the Mexican village of Boquillas you might see Mexican cowboys or goat herders tending their herds. And then its on to the entrance of Boquillas Canyon, delivering you into thirty-three miles of tranquility and beauty. Cutting through the Sierra Del Carmen mountains, Boquillas Canyon

offers calm, gentle rapids with beautiful vistas and a multitude of side canyons to explore.

LENGTH: 5-6 days

PRICE: For prices see our [price list](#).

* Mariscal River Trips require us to go down the River Road in the National Park. This road can become inaccessible in rainy seasons. Please inquire about road and water level conditions the day before your trip by calling us!

Boquillas Canyon:

Boquillas Canyon is the longest and most tranquil of Big Bend's major canyons. The Rio Grande has carved into the Sierra del Carmen mountains, creating canyon vistas rising thousands of feet from river to rim. At times, we see El Pico, a 7,000-foot limestone pedestal, looming above us. On this leisurely multi-day float trip, you have time for nature study, star gazing, campfires, and just plain relaxing. Boquillas' few rapids are gentle class I and II. The scenery on this trip makes it a photographer's paradise. With adequate water levels this trip can be done in three days but is preferred at four to five days giving you more time to explore the many side canyons.

LENGTH: 3 to 5 days

PRICE: For prices see our [price list](#).

If you enjoy your trip, gratuities for your guide are always appreciated.

Backroad Tours



Big Bend River Tours offers several exciting back roads trips in Big Bend National Park, Big Bend Ranch State Park and the Terlingua Area.

Visit sites of old Indian pictographs and petroglyphs, fossil graveyards, and hidden oases including several springs, waterfalls, and swimming holes.



We do all the driving for you, with experienced driver guides who know the areas legends and lore. We provide all the necessary equipment and lunch giving you the time to gaze at the beauty of your surroundings. We would be delighted to share the magic of this beautiful region with you during your visit!.

Local Excursions:

Big Bend National Park / Stillwell Crossing / Terlingua Ranch

This trip combines the wonders of Big Bend National Park with a visit to Halley Stillwells Museum, a visit to the banks of the Rio Grande at La Linda and a back road tour through Terlingua Ranch. You will find that the Chisos Mountains are not the only scenic vistas to encounter in the Big Bend. The morning of the trip will include a ride to the Santa Elena Canyon Overlook for a photographic view of the majestic canyon, a short visit to Castolon, a drive into the Chiso Mountain Basin where we will stop for a picnic lunch. After lunch we'll drive to Stillwell's Hall of Fame Museum for a short visit. Our return trip will take us via the old Marathon road, traveled by early settlers and



the mule trains of the cinnabar miners. As we leave the lodge via "Gate 9" we'll pass by Ament Lake Dam and be treated to a most spectacular sunset as we descend one of the Christmas Mountains.

APPROXIMATE LENGTH OF TRIP: 9AM to 6PM

ALL DAY BIG BEND STATE PARK TOUR

This all day tour begins at our office in Terlingua at 9:00 am. Your trip will begin with a tour of the Barton Warnock Environmental Education Center for a guided tour through the museum.

After the tour you will return to the van to travel the River Road (El Camino del Rio) rated by National Geographic as being in the top ten in the nation for scenic beauty. While on River Road we will stop at the "Streets of Laredo" movie set and at "Big Hill" where scenes from the movie "Fandango" and "Up Hill All the Way" were staged.



After a short drive through the beauty of the Chihuahuan Desert, your next stop will be a short hike into the volcanically formed "Closed Canyon", aptly named for its close walls and the unsalable drop-off that keeps you from descending to the river.

Back to the bus and off to the "HOODOO's", where you'll view some unusual rock formations sculpted by wind and water. There will ample time to hike through the area as your guide prepares a deli style lunch for your enjoyment.

A short stop at the movie set "Crow Town" offering some geological wonders to photograph and marvel over is next on the agenda.

To round out your adventure, time permitting, the last stop will be at historic Fort Leaton for a guided tour and then it's back to the camp site.

APPROXIMATE LENGTH OF TRIP: 9AM to 5PM

SUNSET BIG BEND RANCH STATE PARK TOUR

Our State Park Tour starts at our office at 6 pm where you will load into vans for a trip on the "River Road" to the movie set where hollywood filmed "Lonesome Dove"

Our next stop will be for a short, easy hike into closed Canyon, formed by volcanic lava flow more than 35,000,000 years ago.



And then its's on to the mystical "Hoodoo's"! Here you will see what wind and water can do to the rock, shaping it into amazing top heavy pedestals that seem to defy gravity.

The spectacular vistas on the way back to the "Big Hill" grow more colorful as the sun begins to set. We will stop on the top of the "Big Hill" to watch the sunset and toast the magic of this beautiful country with chilled champagne and cheese cake. (Non-alcoholic champagne available for non-drinkers and children.)

APPROXIMATE LENGTH OF TRIP: 6PM to 9PM

The time of our sunset tours varies due to the time of year and daylight saving.

Big Bend National Park Tours

1/2 Day Guided Hiking Trip:

All of these tours leave our office at 9am and 1pm.



Window Trail

The trailhead for the Window is located in the Chisos Mountain Basin. The hike is of medium difficulty as we will descend 800 feet in elevation and return up the same path. On the way down to the Window, you will pass through an area of open chaparral vegetation and then traverse through beautiful Oak Creek Canyon with its small tinajas where deer can be seen watering and feeding. At the Window the canyon narrows to only 20 feet and looking out you get a panoramic view of the desert below where Terlingua Ghost Town is visible in the distance on clear days.

APPROXIMATE LENGTH OF TRIP: 4 + HOURS

DIFFICULTY: MEDIUM



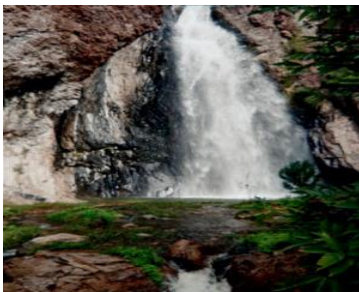
Lost Mine Trail

The trailhead is at Panther Pass in the Chisos Mountains and serves as an excellent introduction to the plants and animals of the high Chisos Mountains. It starts at 5600-foot elevation and goes upward along the north slope of Casa Grande Peak to the summit with its spectacular views at an elevation of 6850.

APPROXIMATE LENGTH OF TRIP: 4 + HOURS

ROUND-TRIP MILES: 4.6 MILES

DIFFICULTY: MEDIUM



Cattail Falls

This hike starts from a spur road off the Ross Maxwell Scenic drive at the base of the Chisos Mountains. Cattail falls has water year round and is a unique and fragile ecosystem abundant in trees, ferns, cattails and spring and summer flowers. This is one of the few places to see long stemmed Yellow Columbine in the Big Bend. Very lush and very quiet. Butterflies and birds abound in this desert oasis.

APPROXIMATE LENGTH OF TRIP: 3 + HOURS

ROUND-TRIP MILES: 3 MILES

DIFFICULTY: EASY



Indian Head

This hike starts in Study Butte and is three miles round trip. The name comes from the Indian rock dwellings, metates, and pictographs and petroglyphs that are found in the area. There is also a natural spring that runs year round. The rock formations due to wind and weathering are quite spectacular as are the views of the Chisos Mountains.

APPROXIMATE LENGTH OF TRIP: 3 HOURS

DIFFICULTY: EASY

All Day Guided Hiking Trip:

All of these tours leave our office at 9am.



Emory Peak

The trailhead is located in the Chisos Mountain basin. Emory Peak is the highest peak in the complex at 7853 feet. The climb up Pinnacles Trail is steep as well as the Spur Trail to the summit with the last 15 feet requiring some rock scrambling. The superb view reaches deep into Mexico with the Sierra del Carmens and El Pico highly prominent.

APPROXIMATE LENGTH OF TRIP: 6 to 8 HOURS

ROUND-TRIP MILES: 9 MILES

DIFFICULTY: HARD



South Rim Loop

The hike starts from the Chisos Mountain basin and is strenuous. We will begin by climbing through Boulder Meadows at the base of Toll Mountain. Beyond Boulder Meadows the trail climbs a series of steep switchbacks through spires of rhyolite to an elevation of 7100 feet at Pinnacles Pass.

The South Rim can be reached by taking the East Rim trail or via a shorter route following the Boot Canyon Trail with excellent views of the "Boot". The South Rim is located on the southwestern edge of the high Chisos Mountains.

From the rim, 2500 feet above the desert floor, you can see Santa Elena Canyon 20 miles to the west and on a clear day you can see the peaks south in Mexico that are more than 80 airplane miles away. The trip then goes through Laguna Meadows, an ancient marshy area where Indians once camped.

APPROXIMATE LENGTH OF TRIP: 9 + HOURS

ROUND-TRIP MILES: 14.5 MILES

DIFFICULTY: HARD.



Mesa De Anguilla

This hike starts in Lajitas at the base of the mesa. The first hour is a strenuous climb through the "saddle" but once on top you will have a beautiful view of the mountains of Mexico and the river meandering far below as you gaze into Santa Elena Canyon. Enjoy time relaxing at Tinaja Blanco.

APPROXIMATE LENGTH OF TRIP: 8 + HOURS

ROUND-TRIP MILES: 14 MILES

DIFFICULTY: HARD

On both half days and full days hiking trips it is required that you bring a backpack, canteen, water (1/2 gallon per person on half days, 1 gallon per person on all days), personal snacks, binoculars, a camera, and sunscreen.

All Day National Park Guided Backroad Trip:

On half day trips we will bring a snack and on full day trips a lunch will be served. Sufficient drinking water is a gallon per person per day. On hotter days you may need even more than this...be sure to bring enough!!!

Visit the magnificent Santa Elena Canyon via the old Maverick Road (dirt) where we'll stop at Luca's Jacal, an old homestead. Once at the canyon, we can stroll to the banks of the Rio Grande, with an



option of hiking a quarter mile into the canyon for some spectacular scenery. We'll leave Santa Elena Canyon and travel the Ross Maxwell Scenic Drive passing through one of the most diverse regions in the park. There are many opportunities for stopping at different locations to view and learn a little of the history of the area. Lunch will be served at one of the scenic campgrounds in the park.

After lunch we will visit the Chisos Basin where we can take a leisurely stroll to the windows overlook, explore the Basin, visit the ranger station or the gift shop for souvenirs and then it's down the mountains and a trip to the eastern edge of the park to Rio Grande Village and perhaps a short hike to the mouth of Boquillas Canyon. On the way back to Terlingua, we can spend an hour or so at the Rio Grande Hot Springs. (bring a bathing suit and towel)

Day Trips:

On all one day trips lunch is served with selections of deli meats, chips and dips, crackers and cookies, fruit, etc. For those who have special dietary needs, preferences, etc. arrangements can be offered to accommodate you.

APPROXIMATE LENGTH OF TRIP: 9AM to 5PM

Sunset National Park Trip:

Your journey begins at 6PM from our office where we will load into vans for a trip to Santa Elena Canyon via the old Maverick road.



After a short hike into the canyon, we'll travel the scenic Ross Maxwell Drive to the historic area of Castalon, and then on for a short hike in Tuff Canyon, formed by volcanic ash that covered this area millions of years ago.

Then it's on to Sotol Vista for spectacular views of the surrounding mountains and desert vistas where we all watch the sun go down and toast the magic of the Big Bend with champagne and cheese cake. (Non-alcoholic champagne available for non-drinkers and children.)

APPROXIMATE LENGTH OF TRIP: 6PM to 9PM

The time of our sunset tours varies due to the time of the year and daylight saving.

Specialty Tours

Big Bend River Tours works with the Lajitas Stables to provide you with two unique ways to see and experience the Big Bend.

This itinerary is intended as an example only. Your trip may vary somewhat depending on weather and river conditions, your guide and your group's interests. Itineraries may be subject to change, please call our office for additional information.



The Saddle/Paddle

Spend 1/2 day horseback riding and 1/2 Day paddling the Rio Grande!

Our trail climbs high up into the mountains of the Chihuahuan Desert that frame the Rio Grande River. Dramatic overlooks, spectacular vistas deep into Old Mexico, and abundant wildlife make this an unforgettable ride. To the north, we get an unsurpassed view of "The Solitario" in Big Bend Ranch State Park – considered one of the seven geological wonders of the world. We wind our way back down Contrabando Mesa amidst stories of the area's very colorful history.

After returning to Lajitas Stables you will have time to change from your riding boots & britches to your shorts & sandals. Your guide from Big Bend River Tours will meet you at the Stables to start your second half of your day-long adventure. Depending on water levels your trip may be done in canoes or rafts.

Water is always magical in the desert. As you gently glide along shores lined with Giant Cane, Mesquite, Palo Verde and Salt Cedars your guide will point out some interesting desert plants, unusual geologic formations and can also answer any questions you may have. Along the way you may pass through Dark Canyon. The cliffs here are literally a hanging garden of cacti and wildflowers. Their blooms splash brilliant colors across its dark walls. This lush riparian area is prime habitat for the 400 plus species of birds found in the Big Bend. Keep a close look out for the Vermillion Flycatcher, Painted and Varied Buntings and Summer Tanager to name a few. After loading gear and canoes or rafts we head back to the Stables thus ends your adventure for the day.

LENGTH: 1 DAYS

PRICE: For prices see our [price list](#).



The TEX Combo

2, 3, or 4 days horseback riding/river running combination.

Big Bend River Tours and the Big Bend/Lajitas Stables invites you to join us for the ultimate frontier experience. Start your adventure on horseback and explore the historic Comanche Creek area on the Texas side of the river. Explore ancient Indian sites and candelilla wax camps. Camp out beneath the stars on the banks of the Rio Grande. Then wake up to a cowboy style breakfast and begin your journey on the river. The

beauty and grandeur all around you will leave you breathless. During lower water the river trip portion will be done in canoes or "duckies" (inflatable kayaks). This trip combines two exciting ways to explore the Big Bend.

LENGTH: 2 to 4 DAYS
 PRICE: For prices see our [price list](#).

Rentals

For Shuttles information and rates please see below.



Big Bend River Tours rents professional quality canoes and various river gear. All canoes come with paddles and lifejackets. If you find you have forgotten something or were unaware that you needed it, stop by our office or give us a call to reserve what you need for your river trip.

We also sell rescue throw-bags, roll-a-tables, roll-a-stools, tie-down straps, cameras, sunscreen, t-shirts, hats, sunglasses, Texas®, flashlights, river maps, paddle gloves, shorts, and various snack items.

Canoe Rentals: \$50.00 per canoe, per day

Rentals include canoe, paddles, one lifejacket for each person and one spare lifejacket, and one spare paddle.

Below is a list of various river equipment that we have available to rent. Each item costs \$7.00 per day and we do require a deposit or credit card information. Your deposit will be refunded if all articles are returned to us clean and in good condition. You will be charged the full retail value for anything damaged or for items not returned at the end of the rental agreement. River Toilet rentals will incur a \$35.00 non-refundable cleaning fee and we will dispose of waste at our facility.

WE DO NOT SUPPLY ANY TYPE OF CARRIERS OR CAR RACKS. IF YOU DON'T HAVE YOUR OWN WE CAN PROVIDE A SHUTTLE FOR AN EXTRA CHARGE.

ITEMS AVAILABLE FOR RENT:

Life Jackets.....Paddles.....Ammo cans....Dry Bags....Fire pans with Grills.....
 Sleeping Bags.....Water Coolers.....Ice Chests.....Water Jugs.....
 Scat Packers (required toilet system).....Boat Pumps....

For overnight trip: If you do not have a sleeping bag, sleeping pad or tent, you can rent them from us for \$10 each plus tax per trip.

Price List 2016-2017

River Tour Prices				
Prices are per person	*2-3 people	4-8 people	9-12 people	13 + people
Half Day Tour	\$75.00	\$71.00	\$68.00	\$63.00
One Day Tour	\$135.00	\$130.00	\$125.00	\$120.00
Two Day Canyon Tour				
Sante Elena Canyon	\$340.00	\$320.00	\$310.00	\$300.00
Colorado Canyon	\$340.00	\$320.00	\$310.00	\$300.00
Mariscal Canyon	\$410.00	\$400.00	\$390.00	\$375.00
Temple Canyon	\$410.00	\$400.00	\$390.00	\$375.00
3 Day Canyon Tour				
Sante Elena Canyon	\$500.00	\$475.00	\$465.00	\$450.00
Boquillas	\$525.00	\$500.00	\$490.00	\$475.00
Mariscal Canyon	\$550.00	\$525.00	\$510.00	\$490.00
Temple Canyon	\$550.00	\$525.00	\$510.00	\$490.00
4, 5 & 6 Day Canyon Tour				
<i>Add an additional</i>	\$140 per/day	\$130 per/day	\$120 per/day	\$110 per/day
7, 8 & 10 Day Lower Canyons Tour				
7 Days	\$1550.00	\$1400.00	\$1350.00	\$1300.00
8 Days	\$1700.00	\$1550.00	\$1500.00	\$1450.00
10 Days	\$1900.00	\$1750.00	\$1700.00	\$1650.00
Hiking, Backroads & Park Tours				
Prices are per person	*2-3 people	4-8 people	9-12 people	13 + people
Half Day Tour (our vehicle)	\$80.00	\$75.00	\$65.00	\$60.00
All Day Tour (our vehicle)	\$140.00	\$130.00	\$110.00	\$100.00
Overnight Tour	\$320.00	\$310.00	\$300.00	\$290.00
Combination Tours Price				
Prices are per person				
1 Day SADDLE PADDLE		\$185.00		
2 Day TEX COMBO 1 night Horse / 1/2 day River		\$365.00		
3 Day TEX COMBO 2 night Horse / 1/2 day River		\$495.00		
3 Day TEX COMBO 1 night Horse / 1 night River		\$705.00		

Prices do not include sales tax, river/park use fees or gratuities.

* Additional fees may apply. Please call for a quote today.

Rates for children 12 and under are \$10.00 less/per day.

Prices subject to change without notice.

Private Shuttle Rates

Prices are subject to change at any time. Call for a quote.

OUR OFFICE TO:	YOUR VEHICLE/OUR DRIVER*	OUR VAN/OUR DRIVER
Grassy Banks:	\$60.00	\$75.00
Madera Canyon:	\$60.00	\$75.00
Colorado Canyon:	\$80.00	\$95.00
Rancherias Trailhead	\$80.00	\$95.00
Santa Elena Canyon (put-in)	\$45.00	\$60.00
Santa Elena Canyon (take-out)	\$85.00	\$145.00
Tally (Mariscal Canyon put-in)	\$145.00	\$275.00
Solis (Mariscal Canyon take-out)	\$120.00	\$260.00
Mariscal Canyon (1 day trip)	\$145.00	\$320.00
Rio Grande Village (Boquillas Canyon put-in)	\$105.00	\$180.00
La Linda (Boquillas Canyon take-out)	\$120.00	\$230.00
La Linda (Lower Canyons put-in)	\$120.00	\$230.00
Dryden (Lower Canyons take-out)	\$260.00	\$490.00

* If our vehicle is used as a chase vehicle (i.e, to leave your vehicle at your designated take-out) the "Our Van / Our Driver" plus the Your Vehicle / Our Driver cost is used since there are two drivers needed.

If your vehicle is used in both the put-in and take-out, the Your Vehicle / Our Driver column is used.

Special Shuttles

Chiso Basin or Panther Junction Shuttle	\$105.00 plus park fees
Rio Grande Village to Santa Elena take-out	\$195.00
Blue Creek or Mule Ears trailheads to Chisos Basin	\$135.00
Alpine, Texas	\$300.00 per trip, per van
Midland, Texas	\$600.00 per trip, per van
El Paso, Texas	\$700.00 per trip, per van
Presidio, Texas	\$300.00 per trip, per van

All Prices are per van. Vans will accommodate 12 people. If your party consists of more than 12 people, an additional van will be required at an additional charge.



BIG BEND STABLES

STUDY BUTTE, TEXAS

800-887-4331

Explore the Beauty of Big Bend Country by Horseback

Our horseback rides border on Big Bend National Park, traversing the multi-colored landscapes of North America's great Chihuahuan Desert.

We are located in Study Butte, TX at the junction of Hwy. 118 and FM-170, just 2 miles from the west entrance to Big Bend National Park and 4 miles from the ghost town of Terlingua.

Let us help you explore this wild, unique terrain and colorful desert landscapes by horseback, mule or burro.



Please arrive 30 minutes prior to scheduled time.

Hourly Ride Descriptions and Prices

1 Hour

Beginner Ride - *Start any hour*

We have a variety of options available for this gentle ride.

\$45 per person

2 Hour

Old Mine Tour - *Start any hour*

Take a ride through history. tour on horseback of the last working quicksilver mine in the Big Bend area. We wind our way through the ruins of human history and drop down into Rough Run Creek. A circle to the base of Maverick Mountain gives us a sense of the pioneer spirit that settled this land.

\$65 per person

2 Hour - Special

Desert Sunset Ride - *Starting time varies with sunset times*

Saddle up and head into the Painted Desert created by the setting sun. The colors of the desert truly come to life on this very special ride. After experiencing the setting sun from the saddle ... the romance of the Wild West will be a treasure in your heart forever.

\$70 per person

3 Hour

Indian Head / Pictograph Ride - *Start any hour*

A tour of the old quicksilver mine and then a ride up onto Ocotillo Mesa for great views of the Chisos Mountains and Big Bend National Park. We drop down off the mesa and cross the water shed desert terrain to make our way to a perfect viewing spot of the Indian Head pictographs.

\$80 per person

Half Day w/Lunch

Chihuahuan Desert Ride - Start 9am daily

Now this is Fun! Take the best of our Old Mine Tour and Ocotillo Mesa trails ending up at the Indian Head Pictographs for lunch. Wait until you see what a wonderful meal we can pull out of a pair of saddlebags. No sandwiches here!! After our picnic, we remount and continue our exploration of the desert. History, scenery, good food, and a trusty mount - all packed into a 4 ½ hour excursion! Yee ha!

\$100 per person

Preparing for Your Ride

Go to our [TACK ROOM](#) to see how to prepare for your Ride/Trip

Important Forms and Documents

The following forms and documents are provided for your convenience in advance of riding with us.

Minimum Age Requirement

6 years old; 6 year olds will be on a lead manned by our trained Wrangler/Guide

All locations offer to lead riders of all ages if they are not comfortable reining their own horse.

Sorry: no doubles.

Reservations and Cancellation Policies:

Advanced reservations for any trip is strongly recommended, though not always required. One may Book Now online with full payment. Or call for reservation and a deposit in the amount of 50% of your total trip cost to hold your reservation.

The Tack Room

What We Provide / What You Need to Bring

The Tack Room has everything you need to prepare for your ride!

Let's see what's in there for your Trail Ride!



Hourly and All-Day Rides

Big Bend Stables ~ Lajitas Stables

ATTIRE:

- Closed toe shoes (tennis shoes are okay, although tougher is better)
- Long pants and long sleeve shirts (light weight and breathable in the summertime, heavier and multiple layers in the wintertime)

HEADWEAR:

- Kids 15 and under are required to wear Equestrian Style Helmets (we provide)
- Anyone there-after may choose to wear a helmet or not. Those choosing not to wear a helmet will be required to sign a waiver.
- Everyone else should wear a hat that will stay on your head!

CAMERAS:

- Smaller hand-held cameras work best while in the saddle.
- Enthusiasts with larger cameras and multiple lenses should have equipment stored in protective, shock resistant carriers and should communicate with your guide throughout the ride regarding your needs and usage.

ACCESSORIES: Not required but recommended for personal comfort and safety.

- Sunglasses
- Sunscreen
- Insect repellent
- Flashlight
- Tissues / moist wipes
- Several Ziploc bags
- A scarf or bandana is always useful.
- Light weight gloves for extended rides are very comfortable.
- Lightweight rain wear / poncho (we will often have extra slickers around, but your own gear always fits better)

SADDLEHORN BAGS TO CARRY STUFF!! We Provide!

We provide saddle horn bags to carry just about everything you need, from your camera, to chap-stick and a light snack. If it is going to make your trail ride more comfortable, we will try to accommodate you.

WHAT NOT TO BRING:

Back packs (throws off one's balance) or larger Fanny packs; we'll move everything to the saddle horn bag.

DRINKING WATER:

"We ask everyone to bring along your own bottled drinking water"

Extreme summer requires more water & winter requires less

1-2 Hour Rides ~ bring 1 – 1.5 liters/person

3-4 Hour Rides ~ bring 2 – 2.5 liters/person

½ with Lunch ~ bring 2 – 2.5 liters/person

Full day Rides ~ bring 3-4 liters/person

(No gallon jugs please!)

Overnight Rides

FROM OUR TACK ROOM (we provide):

- Horses & their Tack
- Vehicle support
- Guides with experience, knowledge and expert Wilderness First Aid training and CPR
- Tents (unless you wish to bring your own)
- Meals (from lunch on the first day to lunch on the final day) *We provide juices, sodas, wine and beer in moderate amounts for the trip. You are welcome to bring along any additional beverages or food products that will make the trip more enjoyable for you. We also cater to special dietary needs with notice. Persons with extreme dietary needs should consider supplementing where necessary.*

YOU SHOULD BRING:

SLEEPING GEAR:

- Bring a sleeping bag

- Additional small sheet or throw
- Sleeping pad and a protective ground cover (5'X7' blue tarp from the discount store works great! Or an unused shower curtain!) We have a limited number of Bags and Pads available for rent.

ATTIRE:

- Closed toe shoes - for in the stirrups (tennis shoes are okay, although tougher is better)
- Second pair of shoes for around the camp
- Long pants and long sleeve shirts (light weight and breathable in the summertime, heavier and multiple layers in the wintertime)

HEADWEAR:

- Kids 15 and under are required to wear Equestrian Style Helmets (we provide)
- Anyone there-after may choose to wear a helmet or not. Those choosing not to wear a helmet will be required to sign a waiver.
- Everyone else should wear a hat that will stay on your head!

CAMERAS:

- Smaller hand-held cameras work best while in the saddle.
- Enthusiasts with larger cameras and multiple lenses should have equipment stored in protective, shock resistant carriers and should communicate with your guide throughout the ride regarding your needs and usage.

ACCESSORIES: Not required but recommended for personal comfort and safety.

- Sunglasses
- Sunscreen
- Insect repellent
- Flashlight
- Tissues / moist wipes
- Several Ziploc bags
- A scarf or bandana is always useful.
- Light weight gloves for extended rides are very comfortable.
- Lightweight rain wear / poncho (we will often have extra slickers around, but your own gear always fits better)

SADDLEHORN BAGS TO CARRY STUFF!! We Provide!

We provide saddle horn bags to carry just about everything you need, from your camera, to chap-stick and a light snack. If it is going to make your trail ride more comfortable, we will try to accommodate you.

WHAT NOT TO BRING:

Back packs (throws off one's balance) or larger Fanny packs; we'll move everything to the saddle horn bag.

DRINKING WATER:

"We ask everyone to bring along your own bottled drinking water for your first day's riding. Your re-usable bottles will be refilled by Stables in evening and for remainder of ride.

” Cooler temperatures ~ bring 2 – 2.5 Liters/person
Warmer temperatures ~ bring 3-4 Liters/person (No gallon jugs please!)

LAJITAS STABLES

LAJITAS, TEXAS

800-887-4331

Experience the Desert by Horseback along the Rio Grande River in the Big Bend of Southwest Texas



The Spanish called it Tierra Desconocida (strange unknown land). A place of mystery and grandeur where the great Chihuahuan Desert meets the Southwest Rocky Mountains.

Let us help you explore these wild, unique mountains and colorful desert landscapes by horseback, mule or burro. We offer small, intimate rides into the mountains along the edge of the Rio Grande River. Larger group rides available upon request.

Please arrive 30 minutes prior to scheduled time.

Hourly Ride Descriptions and Prices

2 Hour

Contrabando Mesa Ride - Start any hour

Wind high along the flank of Contrabando Mesa.

From this vantage point, we look down on the Rio Grande River and deep into Old Mexico.

\$75 per person

2 Hour - Special

Mountain Sunset Ride - Starting times varies with sunset times

Think cool evening breezes refreshing you as the sun paints the sky with a brilliant red brush. Gold-colored light bathes the volcanic mountains, while distant peaks appear close enough to touch. Two hours of pure magic, Big Bend Style.

\$85 per person

3 Hour

Mountain Top Magic Ride - Start any hour

Take the high road! Climb up and onto the top of Contrabando Mesa. Leave everything behind and enter a world of breathtaking vistas and silence. To the South, we look across to the ruggedly wild mountains of Old Mexico.

\$90 per person

4 Hour

Spanish Window Ride - Start any hour

Winding up and out of ancient gorges formed by the Rio Grande, we cross the highlands. Our destination is the Spanish Window and the best view in Big Bend of the Solitario geological formation. From the Spanish Window overlook, look out across Big Bend Ranch State Park down into canyons draped with desert pastels.

\$100 per person

Half Day w/Lunch

West Texas Style! - Start time 9am daily

Have you ever had a picnic on the top of a mountain? We take our Mountain Top Magic, add a touch of the Spanish Window ride for spice and mix well with a shady spot for lunch. Wait till you see the Texas-sized meal spread straight out of our saddlebags. This is a West Texas lunch date!

\$120 per person

All Day Ride Special

True Grit (for More Experienced Riders) - Start time 9am daily

Do hourly rides bore you to tears? Sign up here and bring a strap for your hat! With access to over 290,000 acres, we have the freedom to create a day for you that will not only meet, but exceed your expectations. Mountain tops? Mount up - Let's ride!

Available Fall through Spring ~ Advanced Reservations Require

\$160 per person

Preparing for Your Ride
Go to our **TACK ROOM** to see how
to prepare for your Ride/Trip

Minimum Age Requirement
9 year olds, must be able to guide horse by themselves.
All locations offer to lead riders of all ages if
they are not comfortable reining their own horse.
Sorry: no doubles.

Reservations and Cancellation Policies:

Advanced reservations for any trip is strongly recommended, though not always required. One may Book Now online with full payment. Or call for reservation and a deposit in the amount of 50% of your total trip cost to hold your reservation.

Multi-Day Trips

2, 3 & 4 Day Overnight Adventures

Madera Ranch 2 or 3 Day Overnight Trip

Saddle up for a true western experience of horseback riding and cowboy camping. Explore the canyon lands of the Bofecillos Mountains and the highlands of the Contrabando Mesa. Observe the imprints of the early ranching families that settled where Native Americans had camped for thousands of years before. **These itineraries also combine with the [Horseback/River Combo](#) trips when river levels allow.*



Two Day: \$395 per person (plus tax and gratuities)
Three Day: \$495 per person (plus tax and gratuities)
Prices are subject to change without notice.
2 person minimum
Minimum age: 9 years old
Skill Level: Beginner to Experienced

Buena Suerte 2, 3 or 4 Day Overnight Trip

This multi-day, overnight horseback ride is suitable for riders of all skill levels. From the Rio Grande to the Big Bend Ranch State Park, the terrain oscillates from gentle waterways to rugged mountain tops, covering wildly broken land in between that wind, water and time

have shaped for our eyes' exploration. Camp near a turn-of-the-century Quick Silver Ghost Town, visit the second highest water fall in Texas, Madrid Falls, dally at the turn-of-the-century Crawford-Smith Ranch and marvel at the complex geology of the Solitario Quadrangle.

The 2 Day Overnight Trip combines Day 1 & Day 3 of the Sample Itinerary listed below.

**These descriptions and routes may vary depending upon riding abilities and weather conditions.*

Two Day: \$500 per person (plus tax and gratuities)

Three Day: \$600 per person (plus tax and gratuities)

Four Day: \$725 per person (plus tax and gratuities)

Prices are subject to change without notice.

2 person minimum

Minimum age: 9 years old

Skill Level: Beginner to Experienced



Saddle & Paddle
Horseback Riding &
Canoeing/Rafting Combo
Trips

One Day Saddle / Paddle Combo Spend ½ day horseback riding and ½ day paddling the Rio Grande!

This ride heads out of Lajitas, Texas

One Day Saddle and Paddle Combo

Experience two of the best ways to see the Big Bend Area in one day by joining Lajitas Stables and a Rio Grande river outfitter for this exciting combo adventure!

Sample One-Day Itinerary

Your day will start at Lajitas Stables (located 2.5 miles west of Lajitas, TX, on FM 170) at 8:30 am. Here you will be greeted by your wrangler and given a short riding lesson before heading out.

Our trail climbs high up into the mountains of the Chihuahuan Desert that frame the Rio Grande River. Dramatic overlooks, spectacular vistas deep into Old Mexico, and abundant wildlife make this an unforgettable ride. To the north, we get an unsurpassed view of "The Solitario" in Big Bend Ranch State Park -- considered one of the seven geological wonders of the world. Lunch is a scrumptious picnic (gourmet snacks, imported cheeses & crackers, fresh fruit, trail mix & cookies...) enjoyed in the shade of an overhanging cliff. Yummm! Loading your full bellies back onto your trusty mount, we wind our way back down Contrabando Mesa amidst stories of the area's very colorful history.

After returning to Lajitas Stables, you will have time to change from your ridin' boots & britches to your shorts & sandals. Your guide from **Big Bend River Tours** will meet you across the road from the stables on the banks of the Rio Grande near the historic Rock House river access point. Depending on the water level at the time of your trip, you will be loaded into rafts or canoes for the second half of your day-long adventure.

Water is always magical in the desert. Enjoy the quiet peace (not to mention the softer seat!) of the river as you glide gently along shores lined with cane, tamarisk, and mesquite. This lush riparian area is prime habitat for the 400 plus species of birds found in the Big Bend. Along the way you pass through Black Rock Canyon. The cliffs here are literally a hanging garden of cacti and wildflowers. Their blooms splash brilliant colors across its dark walls.

As you near the end of your half day-long journey, the majestic Chisos Mountains appear in the distance, looking almost close enough to touch. As you gently float down the river, your guide will show you interesting desert plants and point out unusual geologic formations, then serve you a light snack on this quiet section of the Rio Grande.

RATE

Cost: \$195.00 Per Person
(plus tax and state park fees)
2 Person Minimum!

The above itinerary is a sample, only. Your trip may vary from the description above due to a number of factors including (but not limited to) weather, water levels, your group or your guides.

Multi-Day Saddle / Paddle Combos

Exciting combinations of horseback riding and canoeing/rafting in 2, 3 and 4-day trip options!

This ride heads out of Lajitas, Texas

Multi-Day

Saddle and Paddle Combos

Lajitas Stables has joined forces with a Rio Grande river outfitter to offer these exciting combinations of horseback riding and river canoeing/rafting.

Exclusively, our trips make the transfer from your horse to the canoe/raft right from our campsite on the banks of Rio Grande River. We offer this exciting recipe for adventure on just a two-day time frame. *During lower water the river trip portion will be done in canoes or "Duckies" (inflatable kayaks).*

Sample Two-Day Itinerary

Riding and camping are all done on the Texas side of the river. This is the trip with the flexibility to accommodate anyone's age or riding ability. We design the ride around your group's specific requirements. We can explore historic cattle trails, search for fossils, or ride to Indian pictographs - your choice. After a day in the saddle, relax at our base camp at the historical Monilla Ranchito while your

guide prepares an authentic campfire meal. Next morning, trade in your saddle for a softer seat when [Big Bend River Tours](#) company picks you up for a relaxing day on the Rio Grande.

This combination trip offers a taste of the best that Big Bend has to offer - horseback riding through the desert and mountains, canoeing/rafting on the river that is the lifeblood of this country, and a glimpse at the lives of the people of the Mexican Frontera.

Wow! All this in as little as a two-day time frame.

Contact us for details on our 3 & 4 day combo trips!

We Will Provide:

Appropriate horses, qualified guides, raft, all necessary equipment, camping gear, vehicle support and shuttles, tents, and all meals during the trip.

Client Will Need:

Hat with tie strap, sunscreen, rain gear, personnel clothing (adequate & appropriate for the time of year and activities), sunglasses, flashlight, sleeping bag* and pad*. We suggest three pairs of shoes; one with heel to ride in and one pair that you don't mind getting wet and one back-up pair such as sneakers for after your river portion of the trip. See our [Tack Room](#) for further suggestions.

We have a limited number of sleeping kits (sleeping bag, small sheet or throw for colder weather, pad and ground cloth) available for rent at \$30.00 per trip; give us a call about availability.

Your Guides:

On both the river and horseback are trained professionals certified in CPR and Emergency First Aid. They are all Big Bend residents who are more than happy to share their knowledge of the areas fauna, geology, and history.

RATES

2 DAYS: 1 overnight by horse and 1/2 day on the river

\$375.00 per person

3 DAYS: 2 overnights by horse and 1/2 day on the river

\$505.00 per person

*3 DAYS: 1 overnight by horse and 1 overnight on the river

\$690.00 per person

*4 DAYS: 2 overnights by horse and 1 overnight on the river

\$820.00 per person

*4 DAYS: 1 overnight by horse and 2 overnights on the river

\$840.00 per person

*Add \$100/person for Temple Canyon Rafting/Canoeing Trips

(plus tax and state park fees on above rates)

Customize any date from September 1st to May 30th.

Two-person minimum to book!



1-888-989-6900
Your Big Bend Adventure Connection

Desert Sports specializes in mountain biking and river running in both Big Bend National Park and Big Bend Ranch State Park. Our dedicated staff has a special interest in exploring and sharing this corner of Texas in the Chihuahuan Desert. As one of Big Bend's smallest outfitters, we can give your trip the special attention you deserve. With over 20 years' experience, Desert Sports' knowledgeable staff is here to help you plan your Big Bend Adventure!



Guided Tours

Whether you're into Big Bend's boating, mountain biking, or hiking, we've got it covered with great guides and itineraries!

You show up and we take care of the rest!

Desert Sports is Big Bend's smallest outfitter, and we've worked hard to stay that way. We specialize in guided backcountry tours with a more personal touch and pay attention to the details; you'll never feel lost in a crowd. Desert Sports has a small but dedicated staff who are passionate about the Big Bend area in Texas. Our trip leaders are all Big Bend veterans, career guides with a special interest in exploring and sharing our corner of the Chihuahuan Desert.



Our specialty trips – Mountain Biking, River Running, Hiking, and Combo Tours – offer some of the most unique itineraries in both Big Bend National Park and Big Bend Ranch State Park. The Rio Grande offers canoeing and rafting trips that explore some of the most amazing canyons in this part of the United States. Desert Sports has the staff and know-how to make your Big Bend trip unforgettable.

Ride one of the area's many **outstanding mountain bike trails**, hike into **little known areas** of Big Bend Ranch State Park, float for a day through the **spectacular Santa Elena Canyon** in Big Bend National Park, or join a 12-day canoe expedition through the **Lower Canyons of the Rio Grande Wild and Scenic River**. Desert Sports is your **Big Bend Adventure Connection**.

Scheduled Tours

See dates for trips with available space. Join us on our favorite river and backcountry tours!

We've posted dates for some of favorite tours, and we will be adding more tours as they become available! Check back for updates!

These dates will help folks who are traveling solo or groups that don't meet the minimum number. You'll also get the group price based on the final number of participants. At 30 days out, if there are not enough bookings for the trip, then we will need to cancel the dates. You'll get a full refund on your deposit or a chance to book a different trip.



PLEASE NOTE! If your group meets the minimum number (4 for backcountry trips, 2 for river trips), then we can schedule custom dates to fit your group's schedule. The following trips are scheduled, but have openings for additional people. Call for details on the trips listed below: 1-888-989-6900.

River Tours

8-day Lower Canyons Canoe Tour»

No Trips scheduled at this time.
Stay tuned for Fall/Spring dates.

Mountain Bike Tours

4-day Fresno/Solitario/Sauceda MTB Tour»

No Trips scheduled at this time.
Stay tuned for Fall/Spring dates.

2-day Fresno Canyon - Sauceda EPIC Loop MTB/Camping Tour»

No Trips scheduled at this time.
Stay tuned for Fall/Spring dates.

Combination Tours

3-day Solitario Combo MTB/Hiking Tour»

No Trips scheduled at this time.
Stay tuned for Fall/Spring dates.

Mountain Bike Tours

The Big Bend area contains plenty of challenging terrain for Mountain Bike enthusiasts. There are miles of trails and jeep roads to ride in the surrounding mountains and desert, ranging from easy too difficult, from a morning outing to a multi-day adventure excursion.

October through April is the recommended season for multi-day guided mountain bike tours. We have options for day rides most of the year. Plan your 2015 fall ride now!



From the dirt roads of Big Bend National Park to the single track of the Lajitas or the Contrabando Trail Systems, to some of the more remote corners of Big Bend Ranch State Park, Desert Sports can match a trip to your riding style and fitness level. All our **Multi-Day** guided trips include great food, informative and experienced guides, and unique itineraries which can be scheduled **from October through the end of**

April with a minimum of four people. **One-Day** rides include excellent guide service and are available most of the year with a minimum of two people.

Can't make the minimum number for booking a trip? Check the Scheduled Tour Postings or [contact us](#) with your dates and we will try and put you together with other folks to meet the minimum booking requirements.

All trips start with a rendezvous at Desert Sports unless otherwise noted or arranged. Itineraries are subject to change due to weather, road and trail conditions and campsite availability.

Various Big Bend Locations

One-Day Rides

If you're short on time, join one of our guided day-rides. We have various options based on your group's ability and desires for the day. Challenge yourself or take a relaxing ride with one of our experienced, informative guides.

Mountain Bike Day-Rides

The options for putting together Mountain Biking Day Rides here in the Big Bend are numerous. Listed below are a few of our favorites on both the Lajitas Resort Trail System and in Big Bend Ranch State Park, Contrabando Trail System and venturing up and into the Fresno Creek area. There are also options for customized itineraries to fit with the dynamics of your group, give us a call or email and we can discuss some different ideas.



If you want to spend a shorter time in the saddle or just looking for a bit of easy cruising, check out our listings for the Short Rides. These rides are great for folks wanting to get a bit of experience in off-road/trail riding on some of the best trails in this part of Texas. If you are an experienced Mountain Bike rider, these rides can be fast and fun.

Our longer ride options are intended for more experienced Mountain Bikers. These rides demand a bit more time in the saddle and on the trail, from some easier jeep trail cruising to some of the more challenging day rides in the Big Bend Area.

Rating rides is never a straightforward task. Our ratings – *Easy*, *Moderate* and *Advanced* – are intended to give some idea of the technical difficulty of the terrain. You would also need to pay attention to the distances in order to get a more complete idea of the effort needed for the ride. Be honest with yourself, it will hurt less later.

Easy: *Some cycling experience desirable, although a fit person with a good attitude can have some fun.*

Moderate: *Mountain biking experience is a very good idea. More challenging terrain as well as more trail opportunities.*

Advanced: *Mountain biking experience required. The most challenging terrain, getting further out into the backcountry.*

As always, if you have questions do not hesitate to contact us and one of our local trail experts can answer your questions. All trips start with a rendezvous at Desert Sports unless otherwise noted or arranged. Itineraries are subject to change due to weather, road and trail conditions.

Short Rides: 2-4 Hours

Lajitas Inner Loop	Lajitas Trail System: 9-11 miles single track and jeep road. Includes the famous Loops 2 & 3 riding from the Lajitas Airport Trailhead.	Easy	2-3: \$95 each 4-8: \$75 each
Camino Viejo	Big Bend Ranch State Park: 10 miles single track and jeep road. Ride the front country trails of the Contrabando Trail System.	Easy	2-3: \$105 each 4-8: \$85 each

Long Rides: 3-6 Hours

Lajitas Outer Loop	Lajitas Trail System: 15 miles single track, creek bed, and jeep road. Fast and flowing, the old South Side Racecourse from the Lajitas Airport Trailhead.	Moderate	2-3: \$115 each 4-8: \$95 each
Whitroy Mine	Big Bend Ranch State Park: 15 miles jeep road, one of the historic mining ruins near Fresno Creek.	Easy	2-3: \$125 each 4-8: \$105 each
Dome from the West	BBRSP: 11 miles jeep road and single track, the short version of the Dome Trail.	Moderate	2-3: \$125 each 4-8: \$105 each
Dome from the East	BBRSP: 22 miles jeep road and single track, the Classic Dome Loop Ride on the Contrabando Trails.	Moderate	2-3: \$125 each 4-8: \$105 each
Fresno Cascades	BBRSP: 22 miles single track, jeep road and creek bed, a pre-historic campsite on Fresno Creek.	Moderate	2-3: \$125 each 4-8: \$105 each
Madrid House	BBRSP: 28 miles single track, jeep road and creek bed, visit a historic settlers ruin at a Cottonwood Oasis on Arroyo Primero	Advanced	2-3: \$125 each 4-8: \$105 each
Rincon Loop	BBRSP: 30 miles single track, jeep road and creek bed, the "Mini" EPIC that includes the Old Government Road	Advanced+	2-3: \$125 each 4-8: \$105 each

Big Bend Ranch State Park

Fresno Canyon/Solitario/Sauceda, 4-Day

Ride your mountain bike to the heart of “The Middle of Nowhere” as we explore the many highlights on the eastern side of Big Bend Ranch State Park. We will complete the challenging, infamous IMBA EPIC Loop and go the extra miles to visit the geologic wonder of the Solitario, an ancient volcanic caldera. Four days of outstanding scenery and cycling adventures.

Day 1: Ride Contrabando East Trailhead to Pila Montoya (Fresno Canyon to Government Rd.), ± 23 miles.

Day 2: Ride Pila Montoya to Tres Papalotes via Solitario Inner Loop, ± 15 miles.

Day 3: Ride Tres Papalotes to Papalote Llano, ± 20 miles.

Day 4: Ride Papalote Llano to Contrabando East Trailhead (Madrid Rd. to Fresno Creek), ± 24 Miles.

4 days / 82 miles	Moderate +	4 min/8 max: \$825 each
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Big Bend Ranch State Park

Fresno Canyon/Sauceda EPIC Loop, 2-Day

This route, designated an IMBA EPIC in 2010, is one of our most challenging Mountain Bike tours. This ride starts off on the Contrabando Trail System and out past the Whitroy/Buena Suerte mine ruins. Dropping into the Fresno Canyon, we'll skirt the edge of the famous flatirons of the Solitario caldera and up past La Posta Mountain on our way to our evening's destination near Sauceda. Day two begins with the climb up Madrid Hill toward Chorro Vista and then drops us down past the Madrid House and back into Fresno Creek.

Day 1: Ride Contrabando East Trailhead to Sauceda area (Fresno Canyon), ± 30 miles.

Day 2: Ride Sauceda to Contrabando East Trailhead (Madrid Road), ± 28 miles.

2-days / 55+ miles	Advanced	4 min/8 max: \$450 each <i>(backcountry camping near Sauceda)</i> 4 min/8 max: \$525 each <i>(lodging in the “Big House” at Sauceda)</i>
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Big Bend National Park

Old Ore Road/Langford Hot Springs, 2-Day

Traverse the historic route to Boquillas along the western flank of the Dead Horse Mountains. The road descends from a high alluvial plain near Dagger Flats and runs alongside Tornillo Creek, past ruins of early ranching settlements and the dramatic Alto Relex cliffs to our overnight camp near Ernst Basin. Our trip ends at the old ruins of Langford Hot Springs with a muscle-soothing soak in the springs before the drive back to Panther Junction. This is another excellent itinerary for off-road tandem bikes.

Day 1: Ride Dagger Flats to Ernst Basin, ± 18 miles.

Day 2: Ride Ernst Basin to Langford Hot Springs, ± 17 miles.

2 days / 35 miles	Easy +	4 min/8 max: \$400 each
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Bring your own bike or rent one of ours!

Bike rental not included in trip costs shown. Front-suspension mountain bikes rent for \$40/day; includes pump, helmet, spare tube and patch kit, and water bottle.

River Tours

The Rio Grande runs through several beautiful canyons where both peaceful floats and exciting rapids can be found. One of the best rivers in the Southwestern U.S. for extended canoe trips, let our experienced staff introduce you to its hidden treasures in a more intimate setting; great camps, awe-inspiring side hikes and customized itineraries.

We offer canoe and raft trips in the canyons of Big Bend Ranch State Park and Big Bend National Park as well as the Lower Canyons section of the Rio Grande Wild and Scenic River. You'll find leisure and scenery punctuated by a few intriguing rapids on this reach of the Rio Grande in West Texas. The rapids vary according to the amount of recent rain, but under normal conditions, they range from class I-IV.



As with all of Desert Sports' guided trips, great food, informative guides, and unique itineraries are part of the package. Each extended trip has a custom menu to make sure we can accommodate any special dietary needs of your group. All our trip leaders are guides with years of experience leading tours on the Rio Grande. We specialize in keeping our trips small, allowing us to pay closer attention to the details that make your experience more rewarding and complete. Desert Sports' livery includes canoes, inflatable kayaks and rafts, along with all the accompanying gear for safe and comfortable camping trips.

Can't make the minimum number for booking a trip? Check the Scheduled Tour Postings or [contact us](#) with your dates and we will try and put you together with other folks to meet the minimum booking requirements.

All trips start with a rendezvous at Desert Sports unless otherwise noted or arranged. Itineraries are subject to change due to weather, road conditions and campsite availability.

ONE-DAY RIVER TOURS

You only have one day to spend on the river so let us take on the best trip the river has to offer. Make a reservation, show up at our shop, and let us take care of you for the day with great guides, good food, and excellent scenery.

You only have one day to spend on the river, and you want to know your options. The water levels of the Rio Grande vary considerably throughout the year, and those conditions help us determine which sections of the river are accessible for a day trip. We match those levels with the most enjoyable, scenic trip available.

If you make a reservation with Desert Sports, then the day trip will be based on the water levels on the day of your tour. If one of these options does not work for you, then we suggest contacting Desert Sports about a week before your date. We will then have an update on river conditions, but will be unable to guarantee availability.



Day-Trip Fees

Fees include lunch, transport from our shop to the river and back, and an experienced, qualified guide. We meet at 8 am for our one-day excursions and return about 5 pm. All trips start with a

rendezvous at Desert Sports unless otherwise noted or arranged. Itineraries are subject to change due to weather, river and road conditions.

2 people (minimum)	\$225 each (+ tax)
3 people	\$200 each (+ tax)
4 people or more	\$150 each (+ tax)

Higher Water Levels

Santa Elena Canyon Downstream Raft Trip – 20 miles

The first part of this trip meanders through scenic low mountains, bluffs and washes before entering the dramatic cleft in the limestone mesa that is Santa Elena Canyon. The trip descends into the depths of its 1500-ft canyon walls and the notorious Rockslide Rapid. After 8 miles of awe-inspiring canyon, the trip emerges into the open with a dramatic view of the Chisos Mountains as the trip winds towards the take-out near Castolon.

Mid-Water Levels

Colorado Canyon Downstream Trip – 10 miles

The only igneous rock canyon in Big Bend, Colorado Canyon winds through numerous small rapids and includes some interesting side hikes. Travel this stretch in a raft, canoe or inflatable kayak. We also offer a challenging day for those who want to sharpen their paddling skills with one of our instructional canoeing trips. Colorado Canyon at higher water levels also makes a great 'shorter' day trip and is suitable for the young ones.

Low Water Levels

Santa Elena Canyon Upstream Canoe Trip – 6 miles

Our Santa Elena Canyon upstream canoe trip is a low-water opportunity to visit one of the major limestone canyons in the Big Bend National Park. This very active day starts at the Santa Elena hiking trail, where we carry our boats to the river and paddle upstream with stops for exploring and a picnic lunch before paddling back downstream to our starting point.

Hot Springs Canyon – 4 miles

Our trip through Hot Springs Canyon begins with a scenic drive through the spectacular scenery of Big Bend National Park. On the river, we'll be floating past limestone bluffs with grand vistas of the desert and mountains in the distance. This area abounds in historic ruins as well as evidence of other cultures that have inhabited this unique area. One of the features of this trip is a chance to take a soak in healing springs of the Langford Hot Springs.

Large Group Discounts

Groups of 8 or more receive 10% off prices shown for 4 or more.

MULTI-DAY RIVER TOURS

You'll want to add more days as you find the rhythm of the river. Enjoy camping under the stars and hiking through the desert while you explore the canyons of the Rio Grande.

Big Bend National Park

Santa Elena Canyon

Desert Sports offers one-day and multi-day options on this very popular section of river. The first part of this trip meanders through scenic low mountains, bluffs and washes before entering the dramatic cleft in the limestone mesa that is Santa Elena Canyon. The trip descends into the depths of its 1500-ft canyon walls and the notorious Rockslide Rapid. On multi-day trips there will be time for exploring the canyon further, as well as relaxing around camp. After 8 miles of awe-

inspiring canyon, the trip emerges into the open with a dramatic view of the Chisos Mountains as the trip winds towards the take-out near Castolon.

2 days / 20 miles	Intermediate (canoe) / All abilities (raft)	2-3: \$415 each 4 or more: \$350 each
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3 days / 20miles	Intermediate (canoe) / All abilities (raft)	2-3: \$575 each 4 or more: \$510 each
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Big Bend National Park

Santa Elena Canyon Upstream

Our Santa Elena Canyon upstream canoe trip is a low-water opportunity to visit one of the major limestone canyons in the Big Bend National Park. The trip starts at the Santa Elena hiking trail, where we carry our boats to the river and paddle upstream with stops for exploring and a picnic lunch. Overnight trips leave more time for exploring and our three-day upstream excursion allows an opportunity to visit the famous Rockslide Rapid.

2 days / 6-12 miles	Intermediate (canoe only)	2-3: \$415 each 4 or more: \$350 each
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3 days / 6-12 miles	Intermediate (canoe only)	2-3: \$575 each 4 or more: \$510 each
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Big Bend National Park

The Great Unknown to Rio Grande Village

The river from the end of Santa Elena Canyon to the beginning of Mariscal Canyon is seldom traveled, thus the name "The Great Unknown". Our trip continues past this section through the marvels of Mariscal Canyon, San Vicente Canyon and Hot Springs Canyon as we enjoy vistas of the southern ridge of the Chisos and numerous other mountain ridges in the Mexican Reserves to the south. A full seven days of relaxation, this is truly a trip for those who want to get away and escape the crowds.

7 days / 75 miles	Intermediate (canoe) / All abilities (raft)	2 (min)-3: \$1300 each 4 or more: \$1200 each
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Big Bend National Park

Mariscal Canyon

The most remote canyon in the national park, in Mariscal the river forms the bottom of the "bend" of Big Bend. Access to this canyon can be difficult but well worth the effort. The sculpted limestone walls rising 1,800 feet above the canyon floor give the night sky that "river of stars" look from our camp on the banks of the Rio Grande. The three-day itinerary takes in the seldom seen canyons of San Vicente and Hot Springs, which we pass on the way to our take-out at Rio Grande Village.

2 days / 10 miles	Beginner+ (canoe) / All abilities (raft)	2 (min)-3: \$675 each 4 or more: \$475 each
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3 days / 10 miles	Beginner+ (canoe) / All abilities (raft)	2 (min)-3: \$800 each 4 or more: \$625 each
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Big Bend National Park

Boquillas Canyon

Boquillas is the longest, most varied canyon in the national park. The river has cut its course through the Sierra del Carmen, creating magnificent views into both Texas and Mexico. Desert Sports offers Boquillas Canyon trips with either three or four-day options. Both are peaceful and relaxing, but the four-day itinerary, allows even more time for relaxing or exploring the back country and interesting, side canyons along the way. Longer trips available.

3 days / 33 miles	Beginner+ (canoe) / All abilities (raft)	2 (min)-3: \$725 each 4 or more: \$590 each
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4 days / 33 miles	Beginner+ (canoe) / All abilities (raft)	2 (min)-3: \$880 each 4 or more: \$750 each
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Big Bend National Park

Mariscal/Boquillas Canyons

The combination of these two great canyons allows ample river time to enjoy over 60 miles of river running. The trip takes us through four different canyons (including San Vicente and Hot Springs Canyons) on our way to the take-out at Heath Canyon Ranch.

5 days / 61 miles	Intermediate (canoe) / All abilities (raft)	2 (min)-3: \$1125 each 4 or more: \$950 each
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6 days / 61 miles	Intermediate (canoe) / All abilities (raft)	2 (min)-3: \$1275 each 4 or more: \$1100 each
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Big Bend National Park

Temple Canyon

Temple Canyon was named by Robert Hill on his historic 1899 expedition down the Rio Grande. This 11-mile trip takes us through several beautiful limestone canyons as well as some of the most spectacular vistas in the Big Bend region. We come off the river at Maravillas Creek and get to enjoy a peek at the scenery of the seldom seen Black Gap Wildlife Management Area.

2 days / 11 miles	All abilities (canoe only)	2 (min)-3: \$625 each 4 or more: \$395 each
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3 days / 11 miles	All abilities (canoe only)	2 (min)-3: \$725 each 4 or more: \$495 each
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Rio Grande Wild & Scenic River

The Lower Canyons of the Rio Grande

A once-in-a-lifetime experience, the Lower Canyons trip is our guides' top choice. This 83 miles of river encompasses the wildest, most remote reach of the Rio Grande Wild & Scenic River. You'll need at least 7-10 days to navigate this stretch, but we encourage 12 days to experience the stunning side hikes and to enjoy the endless rhythm of the flowing water. Each day brings the challenge of class II-IV rapids and the chance to explore the several canyons that comprise the trip. We love this trip so much, we gave the Lower Canyons its own web page.

7 days / 83 miles	Intermediate (canoe) / All abilities (raft)	2 (min)-3: \$1600 each 4 or more: \$1350 each
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8 days / 83 miles	Intermediate (canoe) / All abilities (raft)	2 (min)-3: \$1750 each 4 or more: \$1500 each
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10 days / 83 miles	Intermediate (canoe) / All abilities (raft)	2 (min)-3: \$2050 each 4 or more: \$1800 each
12 days / 83 miles	Intermediate (canoe) / All abilities (raft)	2 (min)-3: \$2350 each 4 or more: \$2100 each

Large Group Discounts

Groups of 8 or more receive 10% off prices shown for 4 or more.

Lower Canyons River Tours

Experience the Rio Grande Wild and Scenic River in the Big Bend area of Texas. This reach of the Rio Grande is a part of the Wild and Scenic River, established in 1978 and administered by Big Bend National Park. The Lower Canyons trip is just over 83 miles of some of the most spectacular desert and canyon country of the Chihuahuan Desert and is one of the least-run sections of the Rio Grande in the Big Bend.



The Lower Canyons of the Rio Grande is one of our favorite river trips anywhere. The guide staff of Desert Sports has dedicated themselves to getting to know this portion of the Rio Grande. We have some of the most knowledgeable and experienced guides in the Big Bend Area with a special, personal interest in sharing the outstandingly remarkable values of this stretch of the river.

The shortest trip we offer on this reach of the river is 7 days. We recommend stretching this trip to 8-10 days, especially if you want time to explore and visit some of the more remarkable hikes and vistas along the way. Our 12-day version of this tour allows ample time to slow down to the proper pace and really get to know this special corner of the Big Bend.

All trips start with a rendezvous at Desert Sports unless otherwise noted or arranged. Itineraries are subject to change due to weather, road conditions and campsite availability.

Rio Grande Wild & Scenic River Traditional, Raft or Canoe

This is the classic Lower Canyons trip, a true wilderness experience for 7-10 days. You'll have the opportunity to hike side canyons and trails for stunning vistas of incomparable beauty. The scattering of class II-IV rapids provides an excellent arena for improving your canoeing skills. Relax each evening at one of the many fabulous campsites.

7 days / 83 miles	Intermediate (canoe) / All abilities (raft)	2-3: \$1600 each 4 or more: \$1350 each
8 days / 83 miles	Intermediate (canoe) / All abilities (raft)	2-3: \$1750 each 4 or more: \$1500 each
10 days / 83 miles	Intermediate (canoe) / All abilities (raft)	2-3: \$2050 each 4 or more: \$1800 each

Rio Grande Wild & Scenic River Lower Canyons 12-Day Special

Our “deluxe” 12-day trip allows ample time for side canyon exploration and layover days. A beautiful, relaxing raft trip when the river is up and one of our favorite canoe trips in the southwest at most water levels. You’ll be able to exchange your everyday routine for the endless rhythm of the flowing river. You’ll know Asa Jones’s water works, Hot Springs Rapids and the hike to Burro Bluff. You can call yourself a true Rio Grande river rat. A once-in-a-lifetime experience, this is our river guides’ favorite trip.



12 days /	Intermediate (canoe) /	2-3: \$2350 each
83 miles	All abilities (raft)	4 or more: \$2100 each

“Some say you cannot call yourself a true Rio Grande river rat until you have floated the rugged Lower Canyons.”

Hiking Tours

The Big Bend is a big place! At Desert Sports we are always looking for special places that are well-hidden and aren't mentioned in most guidebooks. Whether you are looking for a unique day hike or are ready get away from it all for a few days, we can help to plan a trip to get you there.

October through April is the recommended season for guided hiking tours. Plan your 2015 fall hiking tour now!

Desert Sports provides fully customized, guided hiking trips to unique areas in Big Bend National Park and Big Bend Ranch State Park. All our guided trips include great food, informative and experienced guides, and unique itineraries. Each extended trip has a custom menu to make sure we can accommodate any special dietary needs of your group. All our trip leaders are guides with years of experience leading tours in the Big Bend and we specialize in keeping our trips small, allowing us to pay closer attention to the details that make your experience more rewarding and complete.

All trips start with a rendezvous at Desert Sports unless otherwise noted or arranged. Itineraries are subject to change due to weather, road and trail conditions and campsite availability.

Can't make the minimum number for booking a trip? Check the Scheduled Tour Postings or [contact us](#) with your dates and we will try and put you together with other folks to meet the minimum booking requirements.

Big Bend Ranch State Park Lower Shut-Up Hike Thru Time

This hike is a state park classic. It begins with the drive from the historic Terlingua/Lajitas mining district, along the Camino del Rio and into the state park's interior road system. With interpretive and scenic stops along the way, we'll make our way to our camp inside the ancient caldera of the Solitario. The Lower Shut-up is a spectacular canyon that drains from the Solitario into Fresno Creek taking us through millions of years of geologic history with the hike ending at the old Whitroy Mine.

2 days/6-8 hours hiking	Intermediate	4 min/8 max: \$500 each
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Big Bend National Park

Mesa de Anguila

“There is a maze of trails on the Mesa...travel(ing) through rough country and are suggested only for the most adventuresome and competent backpackers” *Hiker’s Guide to Trails of Big Bend National Park*. This is a full day of hiking from the Lajitas Resort, up the saddle and onto the top of Mesa de Anguila in Big Bend National Park.

1 day/6 hours of hiking	Intermediate	2-3: \$165 each 4-8: \$125 each
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Big Bend Ranch State Park

Explore River Road - Short Day Hikes

The River Road between Lajitas and Presidio has been ranked as one of the top 10 scenic drives in the United States. Join us as we spend the day enjoying the great scenery with some detours off the main traveled route with hikes into some of the known as well as hidden jewels of Big Bend Ranch State Park.

1 day/mileage varies	All Abilities	2-3: \$165 each 4-8: \$125 each
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Various Big Bend Locations

Custom Hiking Options

Desert Sports offers custom itineraries for backcountry hiking and vehicle supported hiking and camping. In Big Bend National Park, the South Rim, Pine Canyon, and Devil’s Den are just some of the options. New opportunities for exploring are opening up in the Big Bend Ranch State Park including Fresno Canyon, Contrabando Trail System, Closed Canyon and the Hoodoos. Call and we’ll design a custom trip to meet the needs of your group.

Combination Tours

Desert Sports is unique in Big Bend in its ability to guide and outfit combination trips. As long time wanderers of this area, we have found that often you have to combine modes of travel in order to reach into the depths of the Chihuahuan Desert. Let our experienced staff lead you on an expedition from the Mountains through the Desert and into the Canyons of the Rio Grande, small groups and big adventure.



October through April is the recommended season for guided combination tours. Plan your 2015 fall combo trip now!

You can indulge dual outdoor passions, or maybe have an opportunity to try an activity you’ve always wanted to try while still engaging in your favorite outdoor activity. Desert Sports provides fully customized, guided trips to unique areas in Big Bend National Park and Big Bend Ranch State Park. All our guided trips include great food, informative and experienced guides, and unique itineraries. Each extended trip has a custom menu to make sure we can accommodate any special dietary needs of your group. All our trip leaders are guides with years of experience leading tours in the backcountry of the Big Bend and we specialize in keeping our trips small, allowing us to pay closer attention to the details that make your experience more rewarding and complete.

All trips start with a rendezvous at Desert Sports unless otherwise noted or arranged. Itineraries are subject to change due to weather, road and trail conditions and campsite availability.

With a minimum of four people, any of the following trips can be scheduled on dates that accommodate your schedule. Also, contact us to put together any combination trip in Big Bend you can dream up.

Can't make the minimum number for booking a trip? Check the Scheduled Tour Postings or [contact us online](#) with your dates and we will try and put you together with other folks to meet the minimum booking requirements.

Big Bend Ranch State Park

Solitario Combination

This trip combines two of our favorite activities in the state park. We mountain bike for 2 days, and then we experience one of the classic canyon hikes of BBRSP. Our ride on day one starts on the Contrabando Trails and heads up Fresno Canyon. The first night camp is up towards the head of Fresno Creek drainage. On Day 2, we will explore the jeep roads on our way into the Caldera of the Solitario. Day 3 is our "Hike through Time" through the Lower Shut-up. The Lower Shut-up is a spectacular canyon that drains from the Solitario into Fresno Creek, taking us through millions of years of geologic history with the hike ending at the old Whitroy Mine.

3 days / 35+ miles Intermediate 4 min/8 max: \$675 each
cycling, 6-8 hour hiking

Big Bend National Park

Glenn Springs/Mariscal Canyon

Mountain biking and boating in some of the most remote back country of the National Park, cycling through the historic Glenn Springs district, down the old Black Gap road and to our river access just upstream from Mariscal Canyon. The final day of this trip is spent paddling the bottom of the "bend" of the Big Bend. This is the classic pedal and paddle trip in the national park.

3 days / 26 miles cycling, Intermediate 4 min/8 max: \$600 each
10 miles paddling

Big Bend National Park

Mesa de Anguila/Santa Elena Canyon

"There is a maze of trails on the Mesa . . . travel(ing) through rough country and are suggested only for the most adventuresome and competent backpackers . . ."

Hikers Guide to Trails of Big Bend National Park

Hiking down to the entrance of Santa Elena canyon, our overnight camp is brought in by gear boat. Day two is spent enjoying the splendor of the canyon and the excitement of the Rock Slide rapid.

2 days / 6-8 hours hiking, Intermediate 4 min/8 max: \$350 each
10 miles paddling or floating

Desert Sports Bike Shop

Come by and visit us! It's the large adobe building painted blue and orange north of FM 170 near Terlingua Ghostown. We will impart our knowledge of current trail conditions and river levels while pointing out the places not to miss. It's where you meet your fantastic guides for your Big Bend tour. It's a place to hang out and hoop while you watch the sunrise or sunset. It's an easy stop to get your biking and outdoor essentials.

Stay hydrated with a raging **Camelbak** or a stainless steel **Klean Kanteen**. Grab a healthy **Clif Bar** snack for the trail.

Protect yourself from the desert sun with caps, sunglasses and our favorite all-natural skin products from **Super Salve**. Check out our selection of Z/1 **Chaco's**—a sturdy sandal for river and hiking. New to the retail stock: **Suncloud** optics! You'll find functional fashion with these 100% polarized sunglasses. Perfect for the desert glare.



Forgot your spare tube or pump? Well, we have many of those biking accessories. Bike need a repair or tune-up? Let one of our technicians get you rolling. Need to ship your bike to the Big Bend? We can help you get it here and get it home.

Mountain Bike and Boat Rentals

Desert Sports rental equipment is top-notch, and we include some extras that help you have a safe adventure – not a misadventure.



Mountain Bike Rentals

Desert Sports is your mountain bike headquarters in Big Bend. We know where to ride and have maps to help you on your trail discovery. Bring your own accessories if you like. Some folks like the comfort of their own helmet, saddle, shoes and clipless pedals. We'll make the necessary changes to your rental bike.

Need extra tubes or help with a loose spoke? We have a stock of basic supplies with a few oddities. Our bike mechanics will get you rolling.

Bike Rental \$40/day; \$175 for 5-7 days; \$30 each day after 7 days

Bike rentals include a helmet, a water bottle, and everything to fix a flat.

Boat Rentals

Desert Sports' rental fleet includes canoes and inflatable kayaks. Life jackets and paddles are included with each rental. A patch kit and pump are provided with all inflatable boats.



Miscellaneous rental items for your river trip include life jackets, paddles, portable toilets (or buy the bag system, Restop, from us), fire pans and other items to make your trip more enjoyable. We can help with your self-guided trip logistics by providing information on river conditions, permit requirements, possible campsites, access fees and other updates. We keep a supply of river maps and guide books for sale here at our shop.

Before setting off on a river trip in Big Bend National Park, or on the Rio Grande Wild and Scenic River, you should familiarize yourself with the Park Services' rules and regulations for river use.

Canoe Rental \$50 for day 1; \$45 each additional day; \$30 each additional day after 7 days

All boat rentals include life jackets and paddles.

Inflatable Kayak Rental 1-person kayak \$40/day
2-person kayak \$50/day

Inflatables also include a patch kit and pump.



Far Flung Outdoor Center

800-839-7238

RIVER TRIPS

There is something about a river trip in Big Bend that makes it the perfect outdoor experience.

We're not sure if it's the curiosity of what lies around the bend, or the peaceful sound of a paddle cutting through the water.

Maybe it's the feel of the wilderness or the vast spaces of untouched land covering two countries.

Or it could be that you can take a lot of camping stuff on a river trip. Enough to make life outdoors comfortable - chairs, good food, good coffee, cameras, tents, tables and stoves.

Of course, it is really not up to us. All of it lies with you. We'll make a river trip on the Rio Grande worth everything you imagined it would be and more.

Take a gander at the list below. Peruse what interests you. And give us a call or drop us a line. We're here for you - as we have been for 40 years!

See you in the Big Bend!



HALF DAY FLOAT

Style: Family Fun
Trip Length: 2-2.5 hours
Difficulty: Easy, some paddling required
Perfect for: Families, first timers
Minimum Age: 4
Departs: Tues, Thurs, Saturdays
Price: \$79/person

There are times when a One Day Canyon float just will not fit into the travel schedule. If that happens, consider our very popular "get acquainted with Big Bend" half-day float trip.

Enjoy Far Flung's four-hour adventure tour on the Rio Grande and still have time in the day for other activities! For example, many of our summer guests take a morning float and are back by lunch to avoid the afternoon heat. Or, like our spring and winter guests, they sleep in, have a leisurely breakfast and enjoy the half-day float during the warmest part of the day.

For those with younger children (under 8), our half-day adventure is just right - not too long, not too short and our guides will enthrall them with stories of the wild outdoors!

Trip Details:

Where to Meet: Far Flung Outdoor Center

Departure Dates: Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays

Should you have a party of six or more, we can easily set up other days during the week!

Summer Departure Times: Half-day floats for the period May 1 - September 30 depart once a day (on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays) at 8:00 a.m. from the Far Flung Outdoor Center.

Fall, Winter and Spring Departures Times: Half-day float trips for the period October 1 - April 30 depart twice a day (on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays) at 8:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m. from the Far Flung Outdoor Center.

Return Time (to Far Flung Outdoor Center): Approximately 4 hours (2-2.5 hours on the river)

Method of Travel: Raft, Canoe or Duckie, depending on water levels.

Difficulty: Easy; paddling is required on trips traveling by canoe or duckie.

Other Notes: This trip travels through the Big Bend Ranch State Park located west of Lajitas. Due to time constraints, the half-day float does not travel through a canyon.

Recommended Minimum Age: 4

Trip Price: \$79/person; *discounts are available for parties of 8 or more booking at the same time. Children 12 and under receive a \$5/child discount.*

(Trip price includes all park use fees, but does not include Texas Sales Tax at 7.75%, energy surcharge, entrance fees (if applicable) or gratuities)

Deposit and Payment Terms:

A non-refundable deposit of \$10/person is required at the time of reservation with the balance due 48 hours prior to the trip departure date.

ONE DAY CANYON FLOAT



There are so many things to do in the Big Bend! An adventure that you just can't miss is Far Flung's One Day Canyon Float on the Rio Grande.

You'll have the opportunity to float, paddle, hike, explore or just plain relax as the Far Flung staff handles all of the trip details – including a river lunch that will knock your socks off!

Visitors ask us all of the time: "Which canyon are we floating?" "Can we float Santa Elena Canyon as a one-day trip?"

We would love to give you a definitive answer, but the truth of the matter is that it depends on day to day water levels. Many years ago, we did not have to worry about water flows on the Rio Grande. We just assumed there would always be plenty of water! Starting in the early 90's, the stress on the Rio Grande from irrigation and droughts was just too much for the ol' gal and she gave way to lower water levels.

Every morning, we take a peek at the water gauges along the Rio Grande (electronically, of course) and determine which canyon is best to float on that particular day. So when you sign up for our day trip, we may not know which canyon we'll float, but we can assure you of several things. First, we'll always do a canyon on the one-day trip and secondly, we'll have a great time on the river regardless of the river section!

Whether it's the limestone walls of Santa Elena Canyon, the volcanic history of Colorado Canyon or a warm soak in the Hot Springs Canyon, a day on the river in Big Bend is better than any day at work!

Trip Details:

Where to meet: Far Flung Outdoor Center

Departure Dates: Monday, Wednesday, Friday and Saturdays

Should you have a party of 8 or more, we can easily set up other days during the week.

Departure time: 8:00 a.m.

Return time (to Far Flung Outdoor Center): Approximately 5:00 p.m.

Method of travel: Canoe or Raft, depending on water levels.

Meals and Refreshments: Lunch, iced tea, lemonade and water provided

Difficulty: Easy; paddling required on trips traveling by canoe.

Recommended Minimum Age: 6

Trip Price: \$145/person; discounts are available for parties of 8 or more booking at the same time. Children 12 and under receive a \$10/child discount.

(Trip price includes all park use fees, but does not include Texas Sales Tax at 7.75%, energy surcharge, entrance fees (if applicable) or gratuities)

Deposit and Payment Terms:

A non-refundable deposit of \$10/person is required at the time of reservation with the balance due 48 hours prior to the trip departure date.

For those with small children or short on time, Far Flung offers a half-day trip in the Big Bend Ranch State Park.



OVERNIGHT FLOAT TRIPS

There is absolutely nothing better than experiencing the canyons of the Rio Grande as an overnight or multi-day trip! When we started Far Flung back in the 1970's our primary offering was the "overnight" and while we offer a variety of other trips these days, the two day, one-night adventure is still our favorite.

What makes the overnight trips so special? First of all, think about a trip where turning your cell phone off is ok. Then think about floating through canyons where the limestone walls rise up to 1500 feet around you. Go ahead and smile when you think about the idea of someone (our guide staff) doing all of the cooking, cleaning and heavy lifting. Now throw in the greatest camp food you've ever tasted and you've got the makings of a perfect wilderness getaway.

Since our river flows are largely regulated by seasonal rainfall and dam releases from Mexico, our ability to predict water levels and which canyon we'll float in advance is limited. Our choice of canyons includes Santa Elena, Colorado or Temple. When planning your overnight on the Rio Grande, please understand that the trip may be conducted by canoe or raft.

Trip Details

Where to Meet: Far Flung Outdoor Center

Departure Time: 8:30 a.m.

Departure Dates: Every Tuesday and Saturday.

Should you have a party of 4 or more, we can easily set up other days during the week.

Return Time: (to Far Flung Outdoor Center): Approximately 4 p.m. on Day 2.

Method of Travel: [Canoe or Raft](#), depending on water levels.

Far Flung Provides: Guides, river equipment, all meals, waterproof bags, tents, park use fees and shuttle to and from the river.

You Provide: Sleeping bag, pad and personal gear ([see packing list](#)).

Difficulty: Easy; paddling required on trips traveling by canoe.

Recommended Minimum Age: 6

Trip Price: \$369/person; *discounts are available for parties of 9 or more booking at the same time. Children 12 and under receive a \$10/child/day discount.*

(Trip price includes all park use fees, but does not include Texas Sales Tax at 7.75%, energy surcharge, entrance fees (if applicable) or gratuities)

Deposit and Payment Terms:

A non-refundable deposit of \$50/person is required at the time of reservation with the balance due 48 hours prior to the trip departure date.

MULTI-DAY PACKING LIST

Thank you for planning a trip with the Far Flung Outdoor Center! If you have questions about your river adventure, we'll be glad to help! Give us a call at (800) 839-7238.

Starting Your Trip

Plan to arrive at 8:15 a.m. on the day of your departure at our office located in Study Butte, one-half mile west of Highway 118 on Farm Road 170. After introductions and the transfer of your personal gear to our waterproof bags, we will depart from the office at 8:30 a.m. Please call us if you are running late. Other guests who have arrived will be more understanding.

Packing Information

Because space is limited on multi-day trips, we will be asking you on the first morning to separate only what you will need for the trip. You will be provided an "overnight" [waterproof bag](#) (16" dia x 36"L) that will be used to carry your sleeping bag and personal gear. Since your "overnight" waterproof bag will not be accessible during the day, you will also be issued a waterproof "[day bag](#)" that can be used to carry items such as sunscreen, camera, rain gear and/or fleece jacket.

Packing List

- River sandals, water shoes or old tennis shoes (please, no-flip flops)
- One pair of shoes for camp
- Fast drying shorts/swimsuit (women may want to wear a swimsuit as their first layer under shorts)
- Short or long sleeved shirt (long sleeve is nice during the hot months of May - September)
- Long pants over fast drying shorts/swimsuit (months of November - April)
- Socks (wool or polypropylene)

- Hat or cap (we like wide brim hats in Big Bend!)
- Lightweight jacket, sweatshirt or fleece
- Good quality rain jacket and pants (months of June - October)
- Sunglasses
- Bandanna
- Flashlight w/extra batteries (headlamps are great!)
- Sunscreen and lip balm
- Water bottle
- Sleeping bag & pad (*see sleeping arrangements below*)
- Small camp pillow
- Small hand towel, soap and toiletries
- Insect repellent
- Moisturizer/skin lotion
- Wet wipes (small package)
- Personal medications
- **For Cooler Months of November - March:** Medium weight jacket, long underwear, gloves, fleece hat and socks

Optional Items

- Camera with spare batteries
- Your own supply of alcoholic beverages or soft drinks; please no glass containers, other than a bottle of your favorite wine that you would like to bring. We will have special storage for wine bottles only.
- Small ice chest (no foam chests, please!)
- Binoculars
- Book/writing journal/notebook
- Fanny pack

Many things come to mind when people contemplate a river trip. Here are some of the more commonly asked questions:

What do I wear on the trip?

Dress for the river is normally fast drying shorts, swimsuit, hat or cap, t-shirt or long-sleeved shirt and river sandals for the warmer months. In cooler months of November through March layering your clothing and limiting cotton attire while on the river is strongly recommended. If you choose to wear sandals, they should have ankle straps. You can cut down on bulk by not bringing too many changes of clothing. Generally, a fresh shirt is nice each day, but short and pants can be worn for more than one day.

What is the weather like?

This is our most frequently asked question, so we'll tell you what the experts say:

Spring (March - April) Day: 75-90, Night: 45-60

Summer (May - September) Day: 85-100+, Night: 70-80

Fall (October - December) Day: 70-85, Night: 45-60

Winter (January - February) Day: 55-75, Night: 30-50

Rainfall averages 10-12 inches per year, with the majority of rainfall during the months of July – September

What about the guides?

Our guides are outdoor enthusiasts with many years of running rivers. They'll haul the gear, organize the hikes, prepare the meals and, with a little encouragement, even provide a bit of entertainment! Realizing that personal involvement increases one's enjoyment of a trip, they will welcome your interest in learning how to row, paddle or better understand the desert plant and animal life. Our staff will enrich your experience by sharing their knowledge of the Big Bend's extensive natural and human history.

Should I tip the guide?

Many guests ask us whether tipping the guides is appropriate. If you believe the guides have exceeded your service expectations, please feel free to leave a tip (10-15% of the trip price is normal). Tipping is by no means required.

What will the sleeping arrangements be?

We furnish tent lodging. Our tents sleep two persons comfortably. If you are traveling alone, you will have your own tent. You should bring your own sleeping bag and pad. We do have a limited quantity of sleeping bags and pads for rent at \$11 each. Our pads are 2 inches thick and are much more comfortable than the traditional, thin Insolite pads you take on a backpacking trip. Please contact our office at 800-839-7238 or email us info@ffoc.net to reserve a bag and/or pad.

What are the meals like?

Our menus vary based on current supplies, but expect something like this: **Breakfast:** eggs, bacon, sausage, pancakes, fresh fruit, coffee, tea and juice. **Lunch:** a deli-style spread of foods such as meats, cheese, fruit, chips, pickles, cookies, and pasta or tuna salad. **Dinner:** fish, chicken, steaks, pork chops, pasta, vegetables, salads, dutch oven dessert. Guests with food restrictions should let us know at least seven days in advance so we can plan accordingly. Ice water will be available throughout the day and tea and lemonade mixes are available at meals. We serve wine with some meals, but please feel free to bring your own supply of alcoholic beverages or soft drinks.

Should I bring a camera? Will there be any side hikes?

Big Bend is a scenic wonderland. We encourage you to bring a camera. We have waterproof bags available to store your equipment, but please remember this is a water activity, and there are no guarantees. Our retail store stocks a full complement of disposable cameras. There are hiking opportunities on the trip, and they vary in difficulty from very easy, to climbing over boulders or up steep trails. Remember, all hikes are optional, so you can choose to lay on the beach, soak up the rays, or just enjoy a book. Cell phones, pagers and anything Wi-Fi or internet related will not work along the river corridor.

What about the bathroom?

Because the trip will take us through primitive areas of Big Bend, bathroom facilities are limited. We use a "porta-potty" toilet system that is set up at each camp in a secluded location. The system functions just like your home toilet except it does not flush. We use a natural biotic product to break the waste down and eliminate any odors. While we are on the water, our guides will have a day-use toilet that is always available. **For Ladies Only:** Women who are concerned about their menstrual period during the trip should bring their own supply of feminine hygiene products and a small supply of zip-lock bags which

can be disposed of in the camp trash containers. We'll have additional tampons and pads available as well as a hand washing system.

Canyon Care

To protect this great resource, we call Big Bend, several protective measures are used. We carry out all garbage and human waste and strain dishwater into the river to prevent fouling of the water. Cigarette butts and other micro trash are put in pockets for later disposal.

The Far Flung Store:

We have a retail store complete with t-shirts, shorts, hats, sunglasses, sunscreen, water bottles and many other outdoor accessories. Our store will be open before and after your trip in the event you need to purchase some last minute article or trip mementos.

Cancellations

Multi-day river trips require a \$50/person non-refundable deposit with the balance due 7 days prior to the trip (specialty trips such as gourmet, New Years, music, etc. have higher deposit requirements and earlier payment times). Because we prepare well in advance for the trip, last minute cancellations are costly. Cancellations more than 7 days prior to the departure date forfeit the deposit amount. Cancellations (including no-shows) within 7 days of the trip departure date forfeit the entire cost of the trip. (specialty trips will have stricter cancellation policies).

Far Flung Outdoor Center reserves the right to alter, modify or cancel any trip or a portion of any trip due to weather, water levels or the safety and convenience of our guests. It is the intent of Far Flung Outdoor Center to operate the river tours in cases where the safety of our guests is not compromised. Guests should appreciate that inclement weather may not be cause for a trip cancellation. In the event FFOC cancels a trip; a full refund will be given.

Responsibility

Trip participants must understand and appreciate that river rafting, canoeing and wilderness travel involve certain inherent risks. These risks include, but are not limited to, loss of or damage to personal property, personal injury or fatality resulting from: capsizing of raft or canoe, collision with a vehicle, vessel, rock, log, tree or other obstacles; falling while aboard a raft; accident or illness in remote places with limited or no medical facilities; and exposure to temperature extremes or inclement weather.

We require all of our guests to sign an Agreement and Acknowledgment of Risk before taking the trip. From time to time, we use photographs and videos of our trips for promotional and business purposes. By going on our trip, you consent to the use of your image, without compensation, for FFOC marketing activities. See you on the river!



3 AND 4 DAY FLOAT TRIPS

So here you are on the Internet, searching for that perfect three to four-day getaway. You've looked at cruises. Nice, but a little too much humanity in one place. Disney World. Great fun, but you've been there, done that.

You want something where very few folks ever go. Something a little on the wild side. Something that brings you back to basics - no cell phones, iPads, traffic or

lots of people. Something that sort of tests you.

Wait now. You don't want it *that* rough. A glass of wine on a sandy river beach watching the sunset. Or maybe a nice walk to an overlook where you gaze out at thousands of square miles of isolation. The cooking, cleaning and hauling done by someone else. Yes, that's it!

Join Far Flung - where wild meets comfortable. Three or four days of solitude in the canyons of the Rio Grande in Big Bend National Park. Float, paddle, swim, hike, explore, relax, learn and share memories with friends and family.

Since our river flows are largely regulated by seasonal rainfall and dam releases from Mexico, our ability to predict water levels too far in advance is limited. When planning your multi-day trip on the Rio Grande, please understand that the trip may be conducted by canoe or raft.

Trip Details

Where to Meet: Far Flung Outdoor Center

Departure Time: 8:30 a.m.

Return Time (to Far Flung Outdoor Center): Approximately 4 p.m. on the last day.

Method of Travel: Canoe or Raft, depending on water levels.

Canyons That Can Be Floated in 3 or 4 Days: Santa Elena, Boquillas and Temple

Far Flung Provides: Guides, river equipment, all meals, waterproof bags, tents, park use fees, and shuttle service to and from the river.

You Provide: Sleeping bag, pad and personal gear (see packing list).

Difficulty: Easy; paddling required on trips traveling by canoe.

Recommended Minimum Age: 8

3 Day Trip Price (3 days, 2 nights): \$539/person; *discounts are available for parties of 8 or more booking at the same time. Children 12 and under receive a \$10/child/day discount.* **Departs on Fridays.**

4 Day Trip Price (4 days, 3 nights): \$699/person; *discounts are available for parties of 8 or more booking at the same time. Children 12 and under receive a \$10/child/day discount.* **Departs on Thursdays.**

Should you have a party of 4 or more, we can easily set up other days during the week.

(Trip price includes all park use fees, but does not include Texas Sales Tax at 7.75%, energy surcharge, entrance fees (if applicable) or gratuities)

Deposit and Payment Terms:

A non-refundable deposit of \$50/person is required at the time of reservation with the balance due 48 hours prior to the trip departure date.



FAMILY ADVENTURE TRIPS

Remember when you were young and your parents took you on all sorts of those family vacations?

Admit it. You rolled your eyes when Dad said, "let's load the car and go camping!"

Now that you're older and have children of your own, those memories are sweet and maybe, just maybe, you want to impart some of those outdoor values and

experiences to those that look up to you.

Far Flung created the Family Adventure trip many years ago to do just that. This overnight trip is all about the young ones. Sure, we'll feed and water you adults, but make no mistake - this trip is all about kid stuff. Exploring, playing, swimming, imagining and building memories.

We time these trips to run during the spring break season, so mark your calendar and pack your gear for the time of your life in Big Bend!

Trips depart every Thursday in March. The 2016 departure dates are: **March 3, 10, 17, 24.**

Since our flows are largely regulated by seasonal rainfall and dam releases from Mexico, our ability to predict water levels too far in advance is limited. When planning your multi-day trip on the Rio Grande, please understand that the trip may be conducted by canoe or raft.

Trip Details:

Where to Meet: Far Flung Outdoor Center

Departure: 8:30 a.m. on Day 1

Return: (to Far Flung Outdoor Center): Approximately 3-4 p.m. on Day 2

Method of Travel: Raft or canoe

Far Flung Provides: Guides, river equipment, all meals, waterproof bags, tents, kid games, park use fees and shuttle service to and from the river.

You Provide: Sleeping bag, pad and personal gear (see packing list).

Difficulty: Easy; paddling will be required on trips traveling by canoe.

Minimum Age: 5

Price: \$349/adult; \$295/each child 12 and under.

(Trip price includes all park use fees, but does not include Texas Sales Tax at 7.75%, energy surcharge, entrance fees (if applicable) or gratuities)

Deposit and Payment Terms:

A non-refundable deposit of \$50/person is required at the time of reservation with the balance due 14 days prior to the trip departure date.



GOURMET TRIPS

Back in the late 1980's we were sitting around camp one evening talking about how good food tasted in the outdoors. Some said it was the fresh air. Some said it was because of the physical work of being outside. And some said it was pure imagination.

So, we decided to test that theory. First, we found a crackerjack Chef by the name of Francois Maeder who

owns [Crumpet's](#) Restaurant in San Antonio. Then, we persuaded Francois (we call him "Frankie") to help us settle this argument by preparing a fresh, "made in the outdoors gourmet meal" using our camp stoves, Dutch ovens and other river utensils.

And you know what? Chef Maeder's food was the best chow we have ever eaten (indoors or out) this side of Mama. So good in fact, that we've been putting these gourmet river shows on now for over 30 years!

Since river flows are largely regulated by seasonal rainfall and dam releases from Mexico, our ability to predict water levels too far in advance is limited. When planning your multi-day trip on the Rio Grande, please understand that the canyon we float through is subject to the vagaries of those river flows. This trip will be conducted in rafts.

Trip Details:

Where to Meet: Far Flung Outdoor Center

Departure: 8:30 a.m. on Day 1

2016 Trip Date: October 14-16

Return (to Far Flung Outdoor Center): Approximately 3-4 p.m. on Day 3

Method of Travel: Raft

Far Flung Provides: Guides, river equipment, all meals, waterproof bags, tents, park use fees and shuttle service to and from the river.

You Provide: Sleeping bag, pad and personal gear ([see packing list](#)).

Difficulty: Easy; this trip will travel through a primitive area with no formal restroom facilities or lodging.

Recommended Minimum Age: 12

Price: \$899/person; Children 12 and under receive a \$10/child/day discount.

(Trip price includes all park use fees, but does not include Texas Sales Tax at 7.75%, energy surcharge, entrance fees (if applicable) or gratuities)

Deposit and Payment Terms:

A non-refundable deposit of \$100/person is required at the time of reservation with the balance due 14 days prior to the trip departure date.



NEW YEAR'S TRIP

Do you remember New Year's 2000? The computers were going to crash, the sun would come up in the west, clocks would run backwards and Elvis Presley would return to Las Vegas.

So, we came up with a "great" idea. We hired a band and snuck off into the wild on New Year's Eve. We figured that if the world ended, at least we'd be in the canyons of the Rio Grande! It

worked great - in fact, too great. We had 98 people on the trip - the largest overnight trip in the history of Far Flung.

Well, we kept the idea and threw out the largesse (no more 98!). New Year's on the Rio Grande is a celebration like no other. Not hard core or wild - just great music, fun loving people and a spectacular venue.

This year's 2016, two-day, one-night celebration was with the musically talented Brian Merrill and Chip Broyles.

Since our flows are largely regulated by seasonal rainfall and dam releases from Mexico, our ability to predict water levels too far in advance is limited. When planning your multi-day trip on the Rio Grande, please understand that the trip may be conducted by canoe or raft.

Trip Date: December 31, 2016 - January 1, 2017 (two days, one night)

Trip Details:

Where to Meet: Far Flung Outdoor Center

Departure: 8:30 a.m. on Day 1

Return: (to Far Flung Outdoor Center): Approximately 3-4 p.m. on Day 2

Method of Travel: Raft or canoe

Far Flung Provides: Guides, river equipment, all meals, champagne, party favors, waterproof bags, tents, park use fees and shuttle service to and from the river.

You Provide: Sleeping bag, pad and personal gear (see packing list).

Difficulty: Easy; paddling will be required on trips traveling by canoe.

Minimum Age: 12

Trip Price: \$525/person;

(Trip price includes all park use fees, but does not include Texas Sales Tax at 7.75%, energy surcharge, entrance fees (if applicable) or gratuities)

Deposit and Payment Terms:

A non-refundable deposit of \$50/person is required at the time of reservation with the balance due 7 days prior to the trip departure date.



WALKS & HIKES

We know you like to get out and explore. And there is no better place in Texas to see big country than Big Bend. On foot. Up close. In the wild.

Sure, you could do it yourself. Grab one of those ubiquitous guide books and take off down the trail. Or, you can take a Far Flunger on the journey with you. Because our show and tell is not to be missed.

Plants, history, animals, stories, secret locations and nuggets of Big Bend insider knowledge.

In fact, the best in the business. So good in fact, that if you are not completely happy with dragging us along, we'll comp the hike. Zip, Nada, Zero. And you'll get to keep the knowledge. Join Far Flung today on a walk into the wild. What's to lose?

LOST MINE

Legend has it that if you travel the Lost Mine Trail on Easter Sunday, you'll find gold.

It's fun to think about, but the real gold is in this popular Big Bend hike. Great views, even better pictures and tons of things to see.



With a Far Flung guide watching your back. If you find the gold, can we go "halvsies"?

Trip Details:

Where to Meet:

You have two choices. You can meet at the Far Flung World Headquarter or you can meet us at the Chisos Basin Visitor Center in Big Bend National Park.

Departure Times:

From Far Flung: 08:00 a.m.

Meet at Chisos Basin Visitor Center: 8:45 a.m.

Return Time/Length:

1:00 p.m. to Far Flung, 12:15 p.m. to the Visitor Center - 4.8-mile hike starting at 5600' elevation

You Need to Bring:

Water bottle or hydration system, good walking shoes that are broken in, comfortable, loose fitting clothes, hat, sunscreen, sunglasses

We Furnish:

A great naturalist guide, trekking poles, backpacks, trail snacks, transportation to and from Far Flung Outdoor Center

Difficulty:

This is a moderately strenuous hike on a well maintained trail. It has about a 2000-foot elevation gain with plenty of stops along the way.

Price: \$99/person; children 12 and younger receive a \$5/child discount.

(Trip price does not include Texas Sales Tax at 7.75%, energy surcharge or gratuities)

Deposit and Payment Terms:

A non-refundable deposit of \$10/person is required at the time of reservation with the balance due 48 hours prior to the hiking departure date.

**CLOSED CANYON**

What is it about cracks in the earth, that we find so fascinating?

Would you like to see one in the Big Bend that you can walk into and explore? Add in a Far Flung naturalist and you have a great little 3 hour walk.

And that's not all. On the way to Closed Canyon, we'll make several stops. One at an old movie set and the other on top of Texas's steepest paved road - Big Hill. Bring your camera as National Geographic rates this drive as one of America's top 10!

The Big Bend Ranch State Park (that's where it's located) calls it Closed Canyon. We call it awesome.

Trip Details:**Where to Meet:**

You have two choices. You can meet at Far Flung's world headquarters or, if you are staying at the Lajitas Resort, we can pick you up (and, of course, return you).

Departure Times:

From Far Flung: 9:00 a.m.

From Lajitas Resort: 9:30 a.m.

Return Time/Trip Length:

From Far Flung - 3 hours

From Lajitas Resort - 2.5 hours

Refreshments: Iced water provided by Far Flung. Guests should bring their own water bottle to be re-filled during the tour.

Difficulty: This is an easy tour suitable for all age groups. The trip will travel by paved road to the Closed Canyon site with stops along the way. Guests should wear comfortable shoes and desert attire. Walking is required and the hike into the canyon is on level, but loose gravel.

Tour Price: \$77/person; discounts are available for parties of 9 or more booking at the same time. Children 12 and under receive a \$5/child discount.

(Trip price does not include Texas Sales Tax at 7.75%, energy surcharge or gratuities)

Deposit and Payment Terms:

A non-refundable deposit of \$10/person is required at the time of reservation with the balance due 48 hours prior to the trip departure date.

**APACHE TRAIL**

It is amazing to us how the Native Americans lived and traveled in the Big Bend. These were some hardy folks. No couch sitters or iPad users in that group!

Although the early residents of this area did not build permanent structures, they did leave a great deal of their lives behind.

If you like cultural history, think about joining us for a 2-hour Jeep tour and walk into one of the many Native American "base camps" in the Big Bend.

You'll need some good walking shoes, a camera and an outdoor mind.

Trip Details:

Where to Meet: Far Flung Outdoor Center

Departure Times:

Summer Departures: Apache Trail for the period May 15 - October 1 depart once a day at 9:00 a.m. from the Far Flung Outdoor Center.

Fall and Winter Departures: Apache Trail for the period October 1 - May 14 depart twice a day (9:00 a.m. and 1:30 p.m.) from the Far Flung Outdoor Center.

Return Time/Trip Length (to Far Flung Outdoor Center): 2 hours

Refreshments: Iced water provided by Far Flung. Guests should bring their own water bottle to be re-filled during the tour.

Difficulty: This tour requires walking on flat terrain with some elevation gain at the end of the trip. In fact, this tour has more walking than actual Jeep time. Guests should be in reasonable physical condition and be comfortable with a 1-mile round trip walk at a very slow pace.

Minimum Age: 6

Tour Price: \$59/person; *discounts are available for parties of 9 or more booking at the same time. Children 12 and under receive a \$5/child discount.*

(Trip price includes guide, "safari" style Jeep and iced water. Price does not include Texas sales tax of 7.75%, energy surcharge, or gratuities)

Deposit and Payment Terms:

A non-refundable deposit of \$10/person is required at the time of reservation with the balance due 48 hours prior to the trip departure date.

CLOSED CANYON

JEEP & ATV TOURS

What is it about a Jeep that gives us a sense of nostalgia? Sure, there are lots of decent four wheeled vehicles out there, but nothing says "let's go explore" like a Jeep.

Forgive us for sounding like a Chrysler commercial. We're just proud of being the first and only real Jeep tour company in the Big Bend - since 1998.



So where do you want to go? What do you want to see? Big Bend only has about 1,000,000 acres of desert to explore. Some of it public lands, some of it not.

Our staff is looking over their maps right now. You can't imagine how restless they get when they're not out finding new routes or showing folks some super neat places.

Help them out with their anxiety. Examine the list below and try on one of our many backcountry tours. Then you can join the ranks of the restless.



BUENA SUERTE

About 100 years or so ago, some pretty hardy folks came out to the Big Bend in search of minerals.

What they found was cinnabar - Quicksilver or Mercury in its final form - and lots of it. So they threw up some shanties and started drilling. With their success came more mines, a small village, a general store, a school, a church and lots of housing.

All of this located in the most backwater place you can imagine - complete with no electricity, running water or flush toilets.

We're going to take you to this place known as the Good Luck mine. All of the dreams of fortune have vanished, but what remains is the neatest little Ghosttown in Texas. If you like human history and man's quest for exploration, you'll love this three-hour trip.

Trip Details:

Where to Meet: Far Flung Outdoor Center. For those staying at the Lajitas Resort, we have pick-up service available at no charge.

Summer Departures: Buena Suerte tours for the period May 15 - October 1 depart once a day at 9:00 a.m. from the Far Flung Outdoor Center.

Fall and Winter Departures: Buena Suerte tours for the period October 1 - May 14 depart twice a day (9:00 a.m. and 1:30 p.m.) from the Far Flung Outdoor Center.

Trips depart: Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays and Saturdays

Return Time/Trip Length (to Far Flung Outdoor Center): 3 hours

Refreshments: Iced water provided by Far Flung. Guests should bring their own water bottle to be re-filled during the tour.

Difficulty: This is an easy tour suitable for all age groups. The trip will be conducted on state and private land via primitive roads with some measure of roughness.

Tour Price: \$85/person; *discounts are available for parties of 9 or more booking at the same time. Children 12 and under receive a \$5/child discount.*
(Trip price includes does not include Texas Sales Tax at 7.75%, energy surcharge or gratuities)

Deposit and Payment Terms: A non-refundable deposit of \$10/person is required at the time of reservation with the balance due 48 hours prior to the trip departure date.



EL CAMINO DEL RIO

There are actually two "River Roads" in the Big Bend area and both of them are extraordinary.

One runs for 51 miles along the southern portion of Big Bend National Park and is a backcountry "gotta see". It is rough, dusty and remote.

The other adventure wiggles its way from Lajitas to Presidio along one of the most beautiful paved stretches of road in the country.

We run the National Park road (although we can arrange a step on tour for you on the other one!). All day, with lunch and the best views anywhere!

If you have always wanted to do this trip or just want something classic Big Bend, let's get this booked for you!

Trip Details:

Where to Meet: Far Flung Outdoor Center

Departure Times: 8:00 a.m.

Return Time/Trip Length (to Far Flung Outdoor Center): Around 4 p.m.

Meal & Refreshments: Lunch, iced tea, lemonade and water provided by FFOC. Guests should bring their own water bottle to be re-filled during the tour.

Difficulty: This is a rough, dusty tour. Most of this adventure will be on primitive unimproved road. This can be a long day for younger folks.

Recommended Minimum Age: 8

Tour Price: \$199/person; *discounts are available for parties of 9 or more booking at the same time. Children 12 and under receive a \$5/child discount.*

(Trip price includes all park use fees, but does not include Texas Sales Tax at 7.75%, energy surcharge, entrance fees (if applicable) or gratuities)

Deposit and Payment Terms:

A non-refundable deposit of \$10/person is required at the time of reservation with the balance due 48 hours prior to the trip departure date.



CAMP 360

What a funny name. Camp 360 sounds like something on a topo map. Or maybe something near the top of Mount Everest.

It's nothing like that. Our first Camp 360 tour back in 1998 was named that because we went to a place that had a spectacular view of Big Bend in all directions.

We've changed this tour over the years (and will again), but the name has stuck. And so have the views. Without a doubt, this is our most popular three-hour trip.

So, grab your camera (they are required!), put on some good walking shoes and join this fun, educational, scenic road trip to the back of nowhere!

Trip Details:

Where to Meet: Far Flung Outdoor Center

Departure Times:

Summer Departures: 360 tours for the period May 15 - October 1 depart once a day at 9:00 a.m. from the Far Flung Outdoor Center.

Fall and Winter Departures: 360 tours for the period October 1 - May 14 depart twice a day (9:00 a.m. and 1:30 p.m.) from the Far Flung Outdoor Center.

Return Time/Trip Length (to Far Flung Outdoor Center): 3 hours

Refreshments: Iced water provided by Far Flung. Guests should bring their own water bottle to be re-filled during the tour.

Difficulty: This is an easy tour suitable for all age groups. The trip will be conducted on private land via primitive roads with some measure of roughness.

Tour Price: \$81/person; *discounts are available for parties of 9 or more booking at the same time. Children 12 and under receive a \$5/child discount.*

(Trip price includes does not include Texas Sales Tax at 7.75%, energy surcharge or gratuities)

Deposit and Payment Terms:

A non-refundable deposit of \$10/person is required at the time of reservation with the balance due 48 hours prior to the trip departure date.

'ROUND THE BEND

Is there such a thing as taking a vacation and going to school at the same time?

Well, if you are coming out to the Big Bend - and it's your first time - give some thought to taking Far Flung's Big Bend 101 course by Jeep. We call it 'Round the Bend.

There are no quizzes, homework or books. Just a curious mind is all that is needed for this 6-hour (we call it all day) adventure into Big Bend National Park.



While we can't take in the entire park (that would translate into days, if not a lifetime!), our FFOC professors of natural history, will turn you into true "Big Benders"!

By the way, you don't have to be a first timer to enjoy this course! And we'll bring lunch.

Trip Details:

Where to Meet: Far Flung Outdoor Center

Departure Times: 9:00 a.m.

Return Time/Trip Length (to Far Flung Outdoor Center): Around 3 p.m.

Meal & Refreshments: Lunch, iced tea, lemonade and water provided by FFOC. Guests should bring their own water bottle to be re-filled during the tour.

Difficulty: This is an easy tour suitable for all age groups. This can be a long day for younger folks.

PLEASE NOTE: The majority of this tour will be on paved roads within Big Bend National Park. This tour is designed for the first time visitor to the park who wants the benefit of our 37+ years in the Big Bend rather than a harder core 4 x 4 backcountry trip. For those wanting more of a 4x4 experience, we suggest our [Camino del Rio tour](#).

Minimum Age: 6

Tour Price: \$159/person; discounts are available for parties of 9 or more booking at the same time. Children 12 and under receive a \$5/child discount.

(Trip price includes all park use fees, but does not include Texas Sales Tax at 7.75%, energy surcharge, entrance fees (if applicable) or gratuities)

Deposit and Payment Terms:

A non-refundable deposit of \$10/person is required at the time of reservation with the balance due 48 hours prior to the trip departure date.



OLD ORE ROAD

Trip Details:

Where to Meet: Far Flung Outdoor Center

Departure Times: 8:00 a.m.

Return Time/Trip Length (to Far Flung

Minimum Age: 8

Tour Price: \$199/person; *discounts are available for*

parties of 9 or more booking at the same time. Children 12 and under receive a \$5/child discount.

(Trip price includes all park use fees, but does not include Texas Sales Tax at 7.75%, energy surcharge, entrance fees (if applicable) or gratuities)

Deposit and Payment Terms:

A non-refundable deposit of \$10/person is required at the time of reservation with the balance due 48 hours prior to the trip departure date.

ATV TOURS



Some years back, we started looking at the idea of providing a different sort of back road experience.

Folks liked the fun, educational format of our [Jeep tours](#). So we said, why not apply those same principles to All-Terrain Vehicles (aka ATV)? Nothing fast, furious or "[Dukes of Hazzard](#)". Just a neat, self-directed ride into the wilds of Big Bend.

So, we went out and purchased a few Polaris Sportsman 500 ATV's that seat two guests very comfortably. Boy, are these babies fun to drive!

But take your choice. Ride with a friend or try one for yourself, but either way, you'll experience the desert in a very unique way.

Trip Details:

Where to Meet: Far Flung Outdoor Center

Departure Times:

Summer Departures: ATV tours for the period May 15 - October 1 depart once a day at 9:00 a.m. from the Far Flung Outdoor Center.

Fall and Winter Departures: ATV tours for the period October 1 - May 14 depart twice a day (9:00 a.m. and 1:30 p.m.) from the Far Flung Outdoor Center.

Return Time/Trip Length (to Far Flung Outdoor Center): 3 hours

Meals and Refreshments: Iced water provided by Far Flung.

Difficulty: This tour is a beginner to slightly intermediate ride; all guests will be required to participate in a pre-trip safety briefing. Far Flung will provide the required helmet and eye protection gear.

Folks, this is a guided tour with the objective of showing you the Big Bend in different way. It is not a high speed, slide around the curves, cut across the desert type of experience. If you are looking to test the limits of an ATV, you will be sorely disappointed in this tour. This tour travels on private land and does not enter the national park.

Age Requirements: You must be at least 16 years old with a valid driver's license to operate an ATV alone, riders must be at least 8 years of age.

Other Notes: ATV tours are operated on private lands; due to insurance requirements, guests are not permitted to bring their own ATV.

Driver Price: \$170/person (*this person actually operates the ATV*)

Rider Price: \$85/person (*this person rides behind the driver*)

(Trip price does not include Texas Sales Tax at 7.75%, energy surcharge or gratuities)

A non-refundable deposit of \$10/unit is required at the time of booking. Final balances will be charged against the credit card on file 48 hours prior to departure.

STEP ON TOURS

So you've decided to come to Big Bend. Or maybe you're already here.

You have your own car, SUV, Jeep, chuck wagon, Hummer or dune buggy. Maybe you want to go see some Big Bend things that are not on a standard Far Flung tour. Or maybe you don't want to be around anyone else but your friends and loved ones.



We're good with that. In fact, for a reasonable fee, we'll rent you one of our Big Bend guides for the day. Your vehicle, our guide. We'll even throw in one of our famous "river" lunches as part of the deal.

Oh, and did we mention that you could rent a Jeep from us to go with your step on guide?

Whether you're riding in a tour bus or Volkswagen beetle, just leave some room for us to get on board and we'll take a spin through Big Bend - on your schedule!

Trip Details:

Where to Meet: Far Flung Outdoor Center

Departure Times: Times to be determined.

Return Time/Trip Length (to Far Flung Outdoor Center): Around 3 p.m.

What Far Flung Provides: Far Flung will provide an experienced Big Bend guide, iced water and binoculars for the trip. Guests are expected to purchase their own and the guide's lunch at a location agreed upon by the group. Should the day's itinerary involve being away from restaurants, Far Flung can provide a field lunch at an additional charge. This lunch is no "brown bag" special, but rather one of our famous river lunches complete with lunch meats, cheeses, breads, chips, dips, fresh fruit, condiments, desert and iced tea or lemonade. Guests should bring their own water bottle to be re-filled during the tour.

Other Terms: Step on guide tour pricing is based on a 4 or 8- hour day even if the actual tour is conducted in less than 4/8 hours. Tours that exceed 4/8 hours will be charged at a supplemental rate of \$50/hour.

Private Vehicle**Price:** \$350/day - (8 hours)**Price:** \$ 199/half-day - (4 hours)**Field Lunch Option:** \$12/person

Trip price includes guide services, iced water and binoculars. Price does not include Texas sales tax of 7.75%, park entrance fees or gratuities.

Tour Buses**Price:** \$475/day - (8 hours)**Price:** \$300/half-day - (4 hours)**Field Lunch Option:** \$12/person

Price does not include Texas sales tax of 7.75%, park entrance fees or gratuities. Please note that an additional \$50 will be charged if the meeting place for the step on guide is other than the Far Flung Outdoor Center.

Deposit and Payment Terms:

A non-refundable deposit of \$50/person is required at the time of reservation with the balance due 48 hours prior to the trip departure date.

**JEEP RENTALS**

Folks ask us all the time - "Is there a place to rent a Jeep?"

Yes there is. We have one Jeep 4-door Wrangler in stock complete with hard top, air conditioning, four-wheel drive and automatic transmission. The Jeep will seat four comfortably with room in the back for a little gear or soft cooler.

Take it on your own private backcountry journey

through Big Bend or use it to run around Terlingua. Either way, have fun!

Rental Details**Rental Rate:** \$169/day**Mileage Charge:** 150 free miles per day, then .25/mile**Rental Period:** 9:00 a.m. to 7:00 a.m., the next day.**Other Terms:**

Tire damage waiver available for \$14.95/day

Collision Damage Waiver (CDW) available for \$19.99/day

Supplemental Liability Insurance (SLI) available for \$8.99/day

Foreign drivers or drivers without proof of insurance will be charged for CDW and SLI.

Must be 25 years of age to rent a Jeep with valid driver's license & proof of insurance.

Lajitas Resort pick-up and drop off available for \$100.

Please, no pets allowed in Jeeps.

Deposit and Payment: Since we only have one rental unit our deposit policy is strict. A \$25 per day, non-refundable deposit is required at the time of booking. Final payment will be charged to the credit card on file upon return of the Jeep.



CANOE RENTALS & SHUTTLES

So you're a river runner? And you want to put together a private trip on the Rio Grande?

Well, you've come to the right place. The Flung house has got everything you need to put together the perfect trip. Ok, maybe not everything, but you'll get

close.

Follow the 5 easy steps below and you'll be well on your way.

Step 1 - Prepare your pre-trip plan

Planning a trip on the Rio Grande involves a number of choices, so it's always helpful to do a little research prior to making your reservation. We have a pre-trip checklist that you are welcome to use in planning your river adventure. Here are some other resources that might be of help:

Step 2 - Renting Your Equipment

We offer professional, commercial grade canoes and inflatable kayaks as well as a variety of river equipment such as toilet systems, fire pans, waterproof bags, etc. Need some help planning what to take? Try Flung's [suggested equipment](#) list.

Item	Price	Comments
Canoes (Old Town & Wenonah)	\$79/day	Includes paddles & PFD's
Inflatable Kayaks (Aire)	\$79/day double; \$49/day single	Includes paddles & PFD's
Ammo Cans	\$3/day	Hard shell protection for personal items, cameras, etc.
Camp Chairs	\$5/day	Nice director style chairs
Dishwashing System	\$5/day	3 tubs, screen, soap, bleach, heating bucket
Fire Pan - NPS required	\$5/day	Can serve as a grill and fire box
Ice Chests	\$10/day	Food, ice storage
Sleeping Pads (Paco)	\$6/day	Waterproof, easy to store
Propane Stove (2&4 burner)	\$8/12/day	Uses standard 20 lb tank
Propane Tank	\$12/day	Comes full with propane
Roll-a-Table	\$6/day	Lightweight, rolls up nice
Sleeping Bags	\$10/day	Three season, lightweight
Tents	\$12/day	Four person, with ground tarp
Toilet System - NPS required	\$18/day	Seem expensive? We clean it, not you!

Item	Price	Comments
Waterproof Bag (large)	\$7.50/day	16" diameter x 36" tall
Waterproof Bag (small)	\$4.50/day	Perfect for gear you need during the day; sunglasses, sunscreen, etc.
Water Containers (5 gallon)	\$6/day	Hard plastic commercial containers for better durability
Water Dispensers (3 & 5 gallon)	\$4/7/day	For drinking water only

Step 3 - Planning Your Shuttle

Far Flung can provide a wide variety of shuttle options for your group using your vehicle, our vehicles or a combination of both. We use modern 15 passenger vans and our drivers are handpicked for the positive attitude and attention to safety and details.

Shuttles using Far Flung vehicles are charged at a rate of \$75/hour beginning and ending at the Far Flung Outdoor Center

Shuttles using privately owned vehicles are charged at a rate of \$35/hour.

Need shuttle miles and approximate times between river locations in the Big Bend?

Step 4 - Calculate Your Fees and Permit Costs

River permits are required in all sections of the Rio Grande from the Tapado put-in to the Langtry Crossing take-out.

Far Flung, at no additional charge, can issue float permits for Big Bend National Park and the Wild & Scenic River (below Heath Canyon). Big Bend National Park permits are also issued at Panther Junction, Persimmon Gap and the Barton Warnock Center near Lajitas. River sections from Lajitas to Langtry require a Big Bend National Park Permit.

River permits for the Rio Grande in Big Bend Ranch State Park may be obtained at the Barton Warnock Center or Fort Leaton, near Presidio. River sections from Tapado Canyon to Lajitas require a Big Bend Ranch State Park Permit.

Big Bend National Park Fees

Backcountry Permit - \$12/group, flat fee

Entrance Fee - \$25/vehicle, good for up to 7 days

Big Bend Ranch State Park Fees

Entrance Fee - \$3/person/day

Camping Fee - \$8/person/night; applicable for trips camping on state lands

Heath Canyon Ranch Access Fee - Heath Canyon is the take out for Boquillas Canyon float trips and one of the put-ins for the Lower Canyons.

Private Access Fee - \$5/person

Vehicle Storage Fee - \$5/vehicle/day

Black Gap Wildlife Management Area Permit - managed by Texas Parks & Wildlife, a limited purpose use permit is required for any party accessing the put-ins or take-outs in the Black Gap river section. The cost is \$12/person and can be purchased online in advance of your trip.

Harrison Ranch Access Fee - for Lower Canyon trips taking out at Dryden

Crossing/Harrison Ranch

Private Access Fee - \$10/person

Vehicle Access Fee - \$30/vehicle

Step 5 - Make a Reservation

Simply call us to make a reservation at **800-839-7238**. We strongly recommend advanced reservations to insure sufficient equipment is on hand and to help you streamline the planning process.

Terms and Conditions

Day rentals will be charged a \$10 non-refundable, non-transferable deposit at the time of booking.

Multi-day rentals will be charged a \$50 non-refundable, non-transferable deposit at the time of booking.

All deposits will be applied to the final balance due.

Cancellations of day rental bookings within 24 hours of rental date forfeit one day's rental on all reserved equipment.

Cancellations of multi-day rental bookings within 48 hours of rental date forfeit one day's rental on all reserved equipment.

Inclement weather cancellations within 48 hours of departure will forfeit one day's rental on all reserved equipment.

Terlingua (Tur-ling-gwah) and nearby Study Butte (Stoodi Beaut)

Located between Big Bend National Park and Big Bend Ranch State Park in southwest Texas, Terlingua is Texas' most visited ghost town. The name "Terlingua" actually applies to a mining district, and there were three different settlements located here in southwestern Brewster County. The name derives from two Spanish words, *tres* and *lenguas*, meaning "three tongues," called such for one of two reasons. Still debated today, some say "three tongues" refer to the three languages spoken in the area long ago – English, Spanish, and Native American. The second reason refers to the three forks of Terlingua Creek.



Terlingua, Texas George A. Grant, 1936, courtesy
National Park Service

The first settlement in the area was a Mexican village located on Terlingua Creek three miles above its confluence with the Rio Grande River. In the mid-1880's, cinnabar, from which the metal mercury is extracted, was discovered, which would slowly change the region from a single sleepy village into a mining district.

The local Indians had long known about the cinnabar, which they prized for its brilliant red color for body pigment. Later, other Mexican and American prospectors also found it, but the remoteness of the area, lack of water and hostile Indians deterred any mining.

However, with the Indian threat past, several locals began small mining operations by the late 1880's and began to produce mercury – usually called quick-silver at the time. The earliest commercial production was primitive, easily taking out the surface outcroppings of ore and utilizing burro-drawn carts to haul the ore to collecting points where it was hand sorted. It was then placed in simple furnaces and heated until the mercury was condensed into its liquid form. These first surface ores were so rich that these primitive methods were enough to produce commercially salable amounts.

In 1884, a local man by the name of Juan Acosta found more cinnabar in the area and worked with an investor named Klein to develop his claim. However, they sold out to a group of California men, who would later start one of the first major mining operations, calling their claim "California Hill." Still, there would be no major mining operations until later as the land had not been properly surveyed. After that occurred in the summer of 1898, the Marfa and Mariposa Mining Company erected the first large furnace in the district.

By the turn of the century, word was out that the region was rich in mercury and by the spring of 1900 about 1,000 flasks of the liquid metal had been extracted by four major producers – Marfa and Mariposa, California Hill, Lindheim & Dewees, and the Excelsior Company.

By that time, a new town had sprung up around the Marfa and Mariposa Mine. It too, became known as Terlingua and the first village was then referred to as Terlingua Abaja, or lower Terlingua. It gained a post office in 1899.

In 1902, the mining camp was described by Stuart T. Penick, a member of the U.S. Geological Survey party: "Terlingua was a sprawling camp of temporary sheds and shelters composed of various kinds of material, such as tin, canvas, old sacks, sticks, and adobe bricks. The only permanent buildings were the commissary and smelter. There were from 200-300 laborers of Mexicans. They seemed to be temporary, for very few of them had families."

In the meantime, Howard E. Perry, a Chicago industrialist, who had purchased 4.5 sections of land in Brewster County, Texas, for \$5,760 in 1887, decided to get in on the action as well.

In May, 1903, he incorporated the Chisos Mining Company and the organization reported the first production that same year. It would become the largest producing mine in the area, and for a time the largest mercury producer in the United States. Production at the mine continued for four decades.



Chisos Mine in its heydays

By 1905, the population of Terlingua at the Marfa and Mariposa Mine, had increased to about 1,000 people. At the same time, another camp had formed around the Chisos Mine, which was also called Terlingua. In May, 1910, the Marfa and Mariposa Mine played out and closed. Its post office was then moved to the "new" Terlingua at the Chisos Mine some ten miles to the east.

The Chisos Mining Company also owned and operated the entire "new" town of Terlingua. It ran the large general store, provided a company doctor, operated the post office, the Chisos Hotel, a commissary, erratic telephone service, a dependable water service and a school. Later, it would also operate a gasoline station, a theater and a confectionary shop. Growing to a population of over 1,000 people, the town was split into two sides – one for Mexicans and the other for Anglos. Overlooking the entire camp was a mansion built by mine owner Howard Perry in 1906. Though he actually spent little time in the camp, it was enlarged in 1911 from one to two stories and contained nine bedrooms. Initially the company processed the cinnabar ore in primitive retorts, where the silver liquid metal was recovered through a simple baking process.



Howard Perry's mansion still stands atop a hill overlooking the town, Kathy Weiser, February, 2011.

As production increased, Perry turned to more industrialized methods, including the installation of a 20-ton Scott Furnace in 1908. Exploration continued, and in 1914 the company discovered one of the richest veins of cinnabar ore in the Terlingua district. This discovery coincided with the outbreak of World War I, and with the increased military demands for the product, the company entered its most successful period. The following year, a bigger and even more modern furnace was installed. Prior to the use of mechanized vehicles in the early 1930s, mule drawn wagon trains delivered the quicksilver to the railroad at Alpine, Texas. Within one ten-day period in September, 1916 two carloads of

quicksilver from the Chisos Mine were shipped from Alpine, valued at more than \$50,000.

Though owner, Howard Perry was rarely there, he maintained absolute control over the mine through daily correspondence and a loyal administrative staff. Though secrecy surrounded the operation, it was estimated that by 1934 the company had sold over \$12 million in mercury and one employee claimed the company averaged daily profits of \$2,000 during the early war years. But, like other mines, it wouldn't last forever. After 1936 production declined, and on October 1, 1942, the company filed for bankruptcy. It was sold on March 15, 1943 to the Texas Railway Equipment Company for \$81,000. It was then operated as the Esperado Mine through the end of World War II in 1945. Afterwards, the surface installations were sold for salvage.

Though the vast majority of the people moved out of Terlingua when the mine closed, it continued to support a population of about 350 people up until the late 1940's. Afterwards it declined to such a point that it was a true ghost town.

Big Bend National Park, tourism brought new life to the village in the late 1960's and early 1970's. However, its growth was slow. By the mid 1990's it had only about a population of 25. Today, the area supports a population of more than 250 people and remains a popular tourist destination. Rafting on the Rio Grande, mountain biking, camping, hiking, and motorcycling are some of the outdoor activities favored by tourists. Terlingua is also famous for its annual chili cook-off and in 1967 was deemed the "Chili Capital of the World." The former company store is now a gift and art shop, river float trips are scheduled in the former cantina, and a dinner theater occupies the former motion picture theater. Located throughout the area are ruins of former buildings and abandoned mines. Terlingua is located near the Rio Grande River, between the villages of Lajitas and Study Butte, Texas.



The old [Terlingua](#) church is undergoing restoration, Kathy Weiser, February, 2011.

Lajitas

Lajitas is on the western edge of Big Bend National Park in southwestern Brewster County. It is at an altitude of 2,200 feet on a bluff overlooking the Rio Grande at the San Carlos ford of the old Comanche Trail, in the northern part of the Chihuahuan Desert and at the southern extreme of the Rocky Mountains. The name Lajitas is Spanish for "little flat rocks" and refers to the Boquillas limestone of the area



The region was sparsely inhabited for thousands of years by semi nomadic peoples related to the Patarabueyes and Jumanos tribes before the Spanish arrived. It is speculated that Cabeza de Vaca crossed the Rio Grande at Lajitas around 1530, and it is almost certain that Antonio de Espejo's party did in 1588. Later, after as the horse became integrated into the Apache and Comanche culture, these nomadic tribes frequented the area, causing the Spanish to set

up a series of Presidios and military colonies, one of which, San Carlos, lies 18 miles south of Lajitas. Anglo-Americans first arrived around the time of the Mexican war. In 1852 Lt. William H. Emory visited the site as part of the first official US survey party.

In the late 1890s quicksilver was discovered near Terlingua, eleven miles from Lajitas, and a rapid influx of people followed. At the same time a number of cattle ranches and mining enterprises appeared in northern Chihuahua and Coahuila. These activities increased commerce across the Rio Grande into Texas; consequently, by 1900 Lajitas was designated a substation port of entry. Farming along the narrow floodplain of the river served to bring in more families, and by 1912 the town had a store, a saloon, a school with fifty pupils, and a customhouse. The crossing, a smooth rock bottom all the way across the river, was the best between Del Rio and El Paso.

H. W. McGuirk, the leading citizen of Lajitas from 1902 to 1917, operated the Lajitas Trading Post, farmed, and helped manage the Terlingua Mining Company. He also funded the construction of a church and a school. Lajitas officially had a post office as early as 1901, but it did not become operational until McGuirk petitioned for its reestablishment in 1904. It was closed temporarily in 1910, reopened in 1916, and closed permanently in 1939. McGuirk sold his landholdings around Lajitas to Thomas V. Skaggs, who continued farming. Skaggs also became successful in a candelilla wax business, the Lajitas Wax Company. In 1916 the interruption of commerce by civil unrest in Mexico, and isolated bandit raids into the US brought Gen. John J. Pershing's troops to Lajitas, where they established a small cavalry post to monitor this critical river crossing.

The Lajitas property continued to change hands and in 1949 was bought by Rex Ivey, Jr., who hand-dug a well and installed a generator for the area's first electric lights. Due to the closing of the Terlingua quicksilver mines, the number of residents in Lajitas had dwindled to four. In 1977 Ivey sold part of the Lajitas area to Houston entrepreneur Walter M. Mischer, of Mischer Corporation; Mischer had begun development and restoration of the community in 1977, under the name of the corporation's subsidiary, Arrow Development Company. By the early 80's,

Lajitas on the Rio Grande had a 9-hole golf course, two lodging units, several condos, and was a local center of economic activity in Brewster County.

By the late 90's, Lajitas and its sister town, Paso Lajitas, Chihuahua, Mexico had over 200 inhabitants. In 2000, the town and surrounding 25,000 acres was sold at auction to Austin entrepreneur/developer Steve Smith, who completely remodeled the town, attempting to establish an exclusive high end resort for the jet set. That effort ran out of steam and money in 2007, and a group of investors bought the property, cut the prices in half, and have created a luxurious and affordable environment for visitors to Texas Big Bend.

Lajitas Golf Resort

The Destination is Worth the Journey. Now that you have arrived, Experience what Lajitas Resort and the Big Bend Area have to offer!

Tucked away in Texas' historic Big Bend between Big Bend National Park and Big Bend State Park lies Lajitas Resort, the perfect setting for your away-from-it-all adventure. Our 27,000 acre Texas resort is famous for its solitude, natural beauty and rugged desert environment. The resort's unique destination is rich in Old West history.

The resort features our world class 18-hole golf course, "Black Jack's Crossing", designed by PGA Hall of Fame golfer, Lanny Wadkins.

We also offer our 5 Stand Sporting Clay Shoot, Cowboy Action shoot, Equestrian Center for family horseback rides, and many other activities designed to keep your family as busy as it wants to be.

BLACK JACK'S CROSSING – 432-424-5080 **Experience World-Class Golf at its finest!**

Black Jack's Crossing is the centerpiece of Lajitas Golf Resort. Conveniently located between Big Bend National Park and the Rio Grande, Lajitas provides the perfect setting for your ultimate Texas golf vacation.

Texas Outside ranked Black Jack's Crossing the "Number One Resort Course in Texas". *Golfweek* magazine has just named Black Jack's the "Best New Course in Texas." And since opening in 2012, the course also has been named the number-four "Best Place To Play in Texas" by the *Dallas*

Morning News and the number-seven "Best Course To Play in Texas" also by *Golfweek*.



Located at Lajitas Golf Resort, a 27,000-acre resort along the Rio Grande, Black Jack's Crossing was designed by golf superstar Lanny Wadkins, winner of the 1977 PGA Championship, eight-time member of the US Ryder Cup team (as well as 1995 team captain), and inductee into the World Golf Hall of Fame.

Named after U.S. Army General, "Black Jack" Pershing who pursued Pancho Villa across the Rio Grande, the golf course combines the historical features of the land with the stunning setting of Big Bend National Park. Several breathtaking mountain holes set against spectacular mountain vistas make this course a true work of art.

The historic Lajitas Trading Post (ca. 1800's), having survived the battles of Pershing, serves as the Pro Shop and Longhorn Museum. The Trading Post (now used as Black Jack's Crossing Clubhouse) is a remnant from the early Texas Frontier where cowboys and miners bartered for supplies and drank whiskey.

One word of advice: Don't forget the camera to bring home memories of this world class golf course!

BLACK JACK'S CROSSING

Course Overview

Architect: Lanny Wadkins

Director of Golf: Greg Smith, PGA

Par: 72



Tees	Yardage	Men's Rating / Slope	Ladies's Rating / Slope
Black	7413	74.3 / 131	
Maroon	6858	71.9 / 126	
Gold	6111	68.6 / 120	74.2 / 139
Rose	5442	65.2 / 108	70.6 / 133

THE PRO SHOP – 432-424-5080

The Pro shop at Black Jack's Crossing is located in the historic Lajitas Trading Post, built in 1899, which also houses the Longhorn museum.

Operating hours are 8:00AM to 5:00PM every day of the week and we can be reached at **432-424-5080**.

Green fees are currently \$125 per person which includes the golf cart equipped with our GPS system, range balls and a cooler with bottled water.



Green Fees: \$125 per person tax included:
 \$75 plus tax for 9 holes
 \$75 plus tac replay rate
 \$87.50 plus tax for active duty military/law enforcement

Club storage is available for our guests who wish to store their clubs at the pro shop during their stay.

Rental clubs are available for both men and women in right and left handed for \$50 per set. (18) holes and \$30 per set (9) holes. Please contact the pro shop to make a reservation.

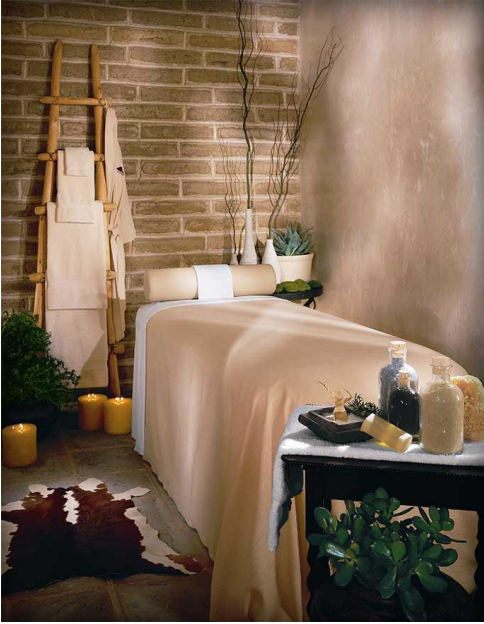
Currently beer and sodas are sold in the pro shop. Outside coolers or alcohol is not allowed and glass bottles of any kind are not permitted.

Lessons from our PGA staff are available for any skill level.

Carts to take a tour of the course without playing are available at a cost of \$50 per cart. Carts must stay on the course and are not available to drive around the resort. Please contact the pro shop to check on availability as during busy times the tours may not be allowed.

The Driving Range is closed every Tuesday at 10:30am for maintenance.

Massages



Agave Massage – 432-424-5146

The Agave Spa at Lajitas Resort is a beautiful oasis in the “high desert”. We offer a variety of spa treatments that are designed to nurture and relax guests using indigenous herbal ingredients such as Agave, Chaparral and stones native to the Big Bend. Specialty massages, facials and body treatments are available and designed for the purpose of relaxation using ingredients that nourish and hydrate your skin. We invite you to our desert oasis, the Agave Spa, where you can choose from a variety of treatments to help relax and rejuvenate your mind, body and spirit.

Agave Massage

This Swedish Massage utilizes a variety of techniques and light to medium massage strokes to promote relaxation and relieve stress head to toe.

Available in 50 and 80 minute sessions.

Anti-Stress Massage

This massage offers a quick pick-me-up therapeutic massage focusing on the neck, upper back and shoulder areas. Relaxes the body and relieves muscle tension most effected by stress and excessive work.

25 Minutes

Big Bend Hot Stone Massage

Stiffness and soreness will slowly melt away as heated stones glide along your body. Warmth from indigenous stones helps alleviate muscle tension and enhance the effect of this highly therapeutic massage. We use Jojoba Oil customized with essential oils to provide a hydrating and intensely relaxing experience.

80 minutes

Deep Tissue Massage

Experience the rejuvenating effects of this highly therapeutic massage. Your session will be custom created based on your specific needs. Your therapist will target areas of chronic muscle tension to increases circulation, enhance muscle function and decrease muscle soreness.

Available in 50 and 80 minute sessions.

Desert Aroma Massage

This “High Desert” specialty will revitalize and lift your spirits as well as hydrate your skin. Your session begins with a gentle dry brush exfoliation and is followed with a customized Aromatherapy Massage using an essential oil blend of your choice leaving your mind stimulated, your body refreshed and your spirits lifted.

80 minutes

Golfer's Massage

This massage is designed with the golfer's needs in mind. Your therapist will focus on crucial muscle groups such as calves and gluteus to relieve soreness and stiffness as well as milder work on other areas such as hamstrings, wrists, elbows, and knees... stretches may also be incorporated.

Available in 50 and 80 minute sessions.

Prenatal Massage

Designed for the Mother-to-be! Your therapist will focus on areas most needing special attention using techniques that are safe for both mother and baby while producing the most relaxing and therapeutic effect possible.

50 minutes

Packages

The Desert Escape

This package includes a selection of relaxing services starting with your toes. Your escape begins with a footbath infused with essential oils, dried herbs, and sea salt followed by a 50 Minute Aromatherapy Massage. No escape would be complete without an Agave Facial. This package is a guest favorite!

Allow approximately 2 - 2 1/4 hours

The Ultimate Hideout

This is a half day event! If you want to pamper yourself or someone you love...this is the package to choose. Your "Hideout" begins with a footbath infused with essential oils, dry herbs, and sea salt. We continue with an 80 Minute Massage; choose from Swedish, Aromatherapy, Deep Tissue, or Sports massage. Your Hideout wouldn't be the ultimate without our Ultimate Facial which includes our extra Lip & Eye treatment. Also included during your facial is a hydrating hand & foot treatment. You will emerge feeling rested, revitalized, and restored...ready to face the world!

Allow approximately 3 1/2 - 4 hours

Golfer's Get-A-Way Package

Your Get-A-Way begins with a special Golfer's foot soak using essential oils, dry herbs with golf balls under your feet to help stimulate your senses as well as your soles. We continue with a 60 Minute Golfer's Massage focusing on your areas of concern and those sore stressed muscles specific to your needs. Also includes a warm & hydrating hand & foot treatment to revitalize those overworked areas. You'll leave ready to play another round!

Allow approximately 1 3/4 - 2 hours

Body Treatments

Desert Rain Body Wrap

This luxurious & hydrating treatment begins with a gentle, dry brush exfoliating treatment followed by an application of Chaparral-Infused Jojoba and Shea Butter in a warm cocoon wrap. Chaparral is native to our Chihuahuan Desert and releases an intoxicating aroma that is first experienced just after a desert rain. This plant has been used for centuries by natives for the healing properties it possesses. Your desert journey may continue by adding a Desert Rain Aromatherapy Massage.

Available in 50 and 80 minute (with Massage) sessions.

Aromatherapy Body Wrap

A restorative treatment for the skin and the senses. We begin with a gentle, dry brush exfoliating treatment followed by an application of an Essential Oil Infused Jojoba Oil and Shea Butter Cream customized depending on the needs and request of each guest.

Available in 50 and 80 minute sessions.

Golfer's Massage

This massage is designed with the golfer's needs in mind. Your therapist will focus on crucial muscle groups such as calves and gluteus to relieve soreness and stiffness as well as milder work on other areas such as hamstrings, wrists, elbows, and knees...stretches may also be incorporated.

Available in 50 and 80 minute (with Massage) sessions.

Body Polish

Our exhilarating polish is custom created with a blend of Shea Butter Cream, Sea Salt & Essential Oils to provide an optimum exfoliation and hydrating experience. A wrap is included to enhance the absorption of the essential oils and minerals.

Available in 50 and 80 minute (with Massage) sessions.

Sole Soothing Ritual

We begin your treatment with a warm footbath infused with a combination of essential oils, dry herbs, and sea salt. We follow this with an exfoliating foot scrub. Your ritual continues with a warm & hydrating hand & foot masque treatment with foot massage. Revitalize your "soul" with this relaxing ritual for your soles...

50 minutes

Facials

Agave Facial

Nourishing the skin with rich botanical ingredients, products are chosen to meet the needs of your specific skin type beginning with a gentle cleansing; a Pineapple and Papaya enzyme treatment is applied to help renew the texture of your skin. The cleansing is followed by toning, a customized mask and facial massage to enhance the results and leave your face feeling fabulous. This selection also includes your choice of focused massage for the neck & shoulder area, hands or feet.

50 minutes

Ultimate Facial

Indulge Yourself! All of the best ingredients are put together for this facial treatment. Fruits enzymes deep clean the skin of impurities and residues as it prepares the skin for the deeply hydrating and cell regenerating collagen serum and mask which helps to prevent damage caused by free radicals and provides intense hydration to give you vibrant silky smooth skin. Special attention is given to the eye and lip area with an added lip and eye treatment that will pamper delicate skin and reduce the appearance of fine lines. Also included is a hydrating foot and hand treatment. You will emerge with your face feeling fresh and fabulous!

80 minutes

Gentleman's Facial

This facial is specifically designed with products formulated for a gentleman's face. We utilize botanical ingredients to cleanse and nourish the skin and soothe the beard area. This selection also includes your choice of focused massage for the neck & shoulder area, hands, or feet.

50 minutes

Mini-Facial

For a quick deep cleansing and hydrating skin treatment, this is your choice! Includes a cleansing, toner, fruit enzyme mask and moisturizer. This is a great first time experience for younger faces and the first timer.

25 minutes

Lip & Eye Treatment

This treatment aids in the regeneration of healthy skin cells to help reduce the appearance of fine lines by using a soothing mask to help moisturize and De-Stress those delicate areas of the skin. This is a wonderful addition to any of the facial choices above.

Can be added to any facial above.

In order to provide superior service to our guests, we request that spa reservations be booked in advance.

We require 72 hours advance notice for cancellation of spa services.

We can create a custom package especially for you. Please call in advance to discuss service options.

Shooting Activities – 432-424-5170

Five Stand Sporting Clay Shoot

One of the finest five stands in the West. This shotgun shooting game using sporting clays, allows shooters of all abilities some of the most exciting target combinations available. One round consists of 25 shots, with groups of shots being taken from each shooting stand.

Cowboy Action Shoot

So you want to shoot like a real cowboy? Learn from the experts. Our cowboy shooters know their way around any kind of weapon of the Old West and will show you how it's done. Our town of Stargazer Springs is full of nostalgia and awaiting targets. You will walk through town shooting a single-action pistol, a side-by-side shot-gun, and a lever-action rifle.



Combat Course

Ready to get your commando on? Try our Combat Course! Experience the use of combat weapons over varied terrain while shooting at mixed steel and paper targets. You will cover this course using an AR-15, a 9mm pistol, and a pump action shotgun.

Combo Shooting Packages

Here's a chance to utilize all of your shooting skills.

Equestrian Center – 432-424-5190

The Lajitas Equestrian Center offers a variety of services; including trail rides, riding lessons, basic and advanced riding clinics and boarding. We strive to match horse and rider to make your experience an enjoyable one, whatever your skill level.

Trail Rides by the Hour

These rides cross Comanche Creek and travel along historic trails providing breathtaking views of Mesa de Anguila, Lajitas Mesa and Mexico.

Half Day Trail Rides

These rides are tailored for the guest, exploring several scenic areas of Lajitas, guaranteeing a true adventure. Half day rides available with lunch included.

Sunrise and Sunset Trail Rides

Ride for two hours off into the sunrise or sunset while enjoying spectacular views. Champagne and Wine & Cheese Trips available.

Note: Riders must be 7 years of age or older, under 18 must be accompanied by a parent. All riders under 18 must wear a helmet



Longhorn Museum

Today, the Yates Longhorn Museum is housed for public viewing, free of charge, at the historic Trading Post building at Black Jacks Crossing Golf Club. We welcome you to come in and find out more about this critical piece of Texas legacy on your self-guided tour.

Longhorn History – Seven Original Families

Texas Longhorn Cattle come in hundreds of shapes, sizes, colors and horn configurations. These unique nature designed features have all been preserved by seven groups of people with seven different origins and seven different genetic bases. All seven are pure Longhorn, yet specific traits ear marked each family with a special stamp. The true connoisseurs of the breed spot these characteristics and point with recognition concerning their virtues.



Prior to the perpetuation of the seven families the wild cattle herds of Texas possessed Spanish, Oxen and European blood. They were and are today a mix of breeds blended and refined by the elements of time, stress and survival.

At the beginning of the registry in 1964, a 100% visual inspection program was implemented to assure purity and type. Registered Longhorns today trace to a full ancestry verified for purity by this careful visual inspection.

Modern blood typing methods have determined a uniqueness of similarity in kinship among pure Longhorns and distant blood common to most other prominent cattle breeds. Longhorn purity cannot be determined by modern blood typing due to the lack of a data base on all families of pure Longhorns during the true time of breed origin.

The seven families were for the most part unrelated. They are Phillips, Wright, Butler, Marks, Wichita, Refuge, Yates and Peeler. All seven families originated in the early 1930's and before. All seven were separate from other herds with minimal exchanges of blood stock prior to 1932.

Today with over 200,000 registered, the breed itself has been preserved. Only two segments are nearly extinct. They are the corkscrew horn and the wine color factors. Near the Ft. Worth, Texas Stock Yards, the largest bronze monument in Texas has been erected with seven Longhorn steers to memorialize the seven pioneer Longhorn herds. The bronze was cast by world famous sculptor Terry Kelsey of Ramah, Colorado. Within the body cavity of the Phillips family representative are actual bones of the most famous Longhorn sire of all time, Texas Ranger. This work of art is titled "Texas Gold."

Longhorn History. Dickinson Cattle Co. Inc. www.texaslonghorn.com

Texas Longhorn History --Yates Family Longhorn History

YATES Cattle were bred during the lifetime of Cap Yates who passed away in the late sixties. Most of the original stock was dispersed by his family just after his death. The Yates herd was about 1500 head of rugged cows in the Big Bend area of West Texas, near Alpine. Mr. Yates felt that no breed of cattle offered the rancher what Texas Longhorns did in that harsh area of near desert. He did a great job of preventing outside blood from entering his program. He honestly felt any other blood was inferior to a small Spanish type rugged Longhorn.

The Yates cows have every quality needed to produce calves in the desert. They are structurally sound and good mothers. They are a true result of survival of the fittest.

The old Yates cattle as a group probably weren't impressive. Many were the smallest horned and most solid colored of the seven families. Today we see beautiful colored Yates cattle which were not a normal thing years ago. Yates cattle lovers have selectively bred for the families with the most color and there are some over 50" horned Yates cows. These are often very twisted as they get old. Some Yates cows are very "long headed," "sway backed," and have high tail sets. Of all seven, they represent the old traditional coarse small and rangy type. There were few truly magnificent Yates cows for horn. These few 50" cows in number probably were one in hundreds among Yates cows. The normal Yates cow has a small circumference and short horn tip to tip.

Yates Family History. Dickinson Cattle Co. Inc. www.texaslonghorn.com



Mountain Biking

The Fresno Saucedo Loop at Big Bend Ranch State Park has been named an epic trail by the International Mountain Bicycling Association and Lajitas Golf Resort & Spa is the perfect jumping off point for your epic ride. Or finish your ride and travel the Lajitas trails back to the hotel...

General Store – 432-424-5040

The Lajitas General Store is open to all guests and community residents; providing groceries, necessities and sundries. Guests participating in day excursions, such as hiking, biking and hunting, can order boxed lunches to order from our fresh deli selections.



Dining Under the Stars – 432-424-5000

Nestled in the hills of Lajitas' back country is the perfect location for a unique dining experience that is truly away from it all. Star Gazer Mesa provides guests a setting and dining experience that is true to the Old West, using Dutch ovens and hot coals to prepare an outstanding meal. Join us after a trail ride or pre-arrange transportation by vehicle or hay wagon to dine among the stars.



Jeep Rental – 432-424-5170

Feeling adventurous? Rent one of our jeeps and explore the area on your own.



Birding – 432-424-5000

Avid birder? Or casual bird-watcher? The Big Bend is home to, or in the migration path of, numerous species.

Laird Considine from Barton Warnock State Park created a list of birds he has spotted in the area and you will find it on our Birding in Big Bend page.



Zip Line – 432-424-5170

Experience the NEW Lajitas Zip-Line Tour in Quiet Canyon!

With steep elevation changes from upper canyon to canyon floor, a world class adrenaline producing zip line tour awaits. With several different tour options, please contact our activities desk to learn more or to schedule your tour by calling 432-424-5170.



Dining

Whether you are looking for a full dining experience or a casual bar and grill, Lajitas has just what you are looking for!



Candelilla Café – 432-424-5030

Enjoy breakfast, lunch and dinner at the Candelilla Café! Candelilla Café offers a diverse menu which features prime cut steaks, chicken, seafood and a selection of signature side dishes. Choose from creative selections such as Queso con Rajas, Fajitas, or a great filet; offering an interesting twist on traditional Tex Mex cuisine. With panoramic views from the dining room and patio of Lajitas Mountains and Black Jack's Crossing Golf Course you'll enjoy the friendly service and savory cuisine provided by our Executive Chef. Outdoor dining and a welcoming fire pit make for a perfect Texas evening of dinner and conversation.

HOURS: 7AM - 9PM Daily



Thirsty Goat Saloon – 432-424-5033

The Thirsty Goat Saloon is the resort's designated watering hole, named for Lajitas' duly elected mayor, Clay Henry, who is also a goat! Clay Henry was famous for his thirst for Lone Star Beer. The Thirsty Goat is the perfect spot to relax with friends and family. With its Old West charm leather sofas & chairs it's the perfect place to sit back and enjoy the food while listening to great live music!

HOURS: Monday to Thursday 12PM-10PM, Friday & Saturday 11AM- 11PM, Sunday 11AM-10PM



Licha's Bakery

If it's breakfast on the run you are looking for, stop by Licha's Bakery and enjoy a great cup of coffee with homemade kolaches, Danish turnovers, muffins or a hot cinnamon roll. **HOURS: Daily 7:30 - 11AM**



General Store Deli – 432-424-5040

Stop by the Deli where we make box lunches to go, wine and cheese baskets or anything you will need for your day of exploration in the Big Bend Region.

HOURS -- 8AM - 6PM Daily





History of Marathon, Texas

Marathon, the second-largest town in Brewster County, is located on the Southern Pacific Railroad at the intersection of U.S. highways 90 and 385, twenty-six miles southeast of Alpine in the northern part of the county. The town was founded when the Galveston, Harrisburg and San Antonio Railway built across what was then part of Presidio County. A crew building east from El Paso reached the town site in March 1882. At that time the area had already attracted a few settlers. Among the first were two brothers from San Antonio, Solomon and Mayer Halff, who established the headquarters of their Circle Dot Ranch near Peña Colorado Springs, four miles southwest of the town site. In 1879 the Halffs leased part of their land to the federal government for the establishment of Camp Peña Colorado, which became the local center of population before the railroad. Capt. Albion E. Shepard, a former sea captain who had worked as a surveyor for the railroad, bought land in the area on March 10, 1882, and established the Iron Mountain Ranch, north of the site of future Marathon. When he applied for a post office in September 1882, he estimated that the local population was about 130 and "increasing rapidly." A post office was established there on February 13, 1883. Shepard named the site Marathon because its terrain reminded him of the plains of Marathon, Greece.



The railroad turned Marathon into a shipping and supply point for area ranchers. In 1884 the population was estimated at fifty, and local businesses included four livestock breeders, one sheep breeder (Shepard), and one saloon. At that time the principal products shipped from Marathon included livestock, wool, and large game animals, including deer, antelope, and bear. In that year Jim P. Wilson shipped an entire trainload of cattle to Marathon, then hired fourteen Mexicans to drive the herd, on foot, to his ranch in Green Valley, some sixty-five miles to the southwest. On December 1, 1885, Shepard deeded Section 18 of Survey Block 4 to his son, Ben E. Shepard, for five dollars. Ben had it platted and sold the first lot to Otto Peterles on March 25, 1886. In 1887, when Brewster, Buchel, and Foley counties were formed out of Presidio County, Marathon was designated the county seat of Buchel County. In 1897, however, Buchel and Foley counties, which had never been organized, were disestablished, and their territory officially became part of Brewster County, which thus became the largest in Texas.

The first school in Marathon was apparently a private school taught by a Miss Paxton in the 1880s. In 1888 a one-room building was constructed to serve as a school, church, and community meeting hall. Ten years later this building was enlarged and divided by a curtain into two rooms. By 1896 the town's estimated population had more than doubled to 110. The Marathon Baptist Church was organized in

February 1898 and met in the schoolhouse until a building was completed in 1910. St. Mary's Catholic Church was founded in 1908 and moved into a new building in January 1909. The Marathon Methodist Church was completed in 1910. A new three-room school was built around 1909, remodeled in 1922, and condemned by the state in 1938. The first Mexican-American school to provide English classes was held in a private home, but in 1910 Hidalgo Ward School for Mexican Americans was built. The Marathon Independent School District was established in 1947, and a new elementary school was built in 1965.

A windmill in the middle of North First Street was Marathon's first jail. Drunks and other petty offenders were chained to one of its legs; serious offenders were taken to the Alpine jail. Later, a one-room adobe house behind French's Store served as a jail but, after several escapes, was replaced by a rock jailhouse. Eventually, used cells from the Alpine jail were installed. The first newspaper in Marathon was apparently called the Eagle; only two issues, from 1908 and 1910, survive. Around 1911 Jack Newsam bought the paper and changed its name to the Hustler. Since Newsam sold out in 1919, no newspaper has been published in Marathon, with the exception of various high school publications.



The Marathon Jail

On September 7, 1904, state comptroller J. W. Stephens announced that all lots in Marathon were delinquent for taxes in 1899, 1900, and 1901 and were therefore forfeited to the state. Fortunately for those who lived there, John Stillwell filed on the section as school land, then sold part to local merchants C. W. and L. L. Hess and Tom Burnam, who patented the land and recognized the quit-claim deeds held by the residents.

Marathon was the principal shipping point for most Brewster County ranchers because its location in the relatively flat Marathon basin was more accessible to cattle than Alpine. It also served the mining operations at Boquillas. In addition, in the early twentieth century, Marathon became the center of the guayule rubber industry. In 1907 a group of San Antonio investors organized the Texas Rubber Company, which opened a factory in Marathon. In 1909 William Stayton bought the factory, which closed shortly thereafter when the local supply of guayule plants proved to be less extensive than hoped. The factory reopened as the Border Rubber Company under Charles T. Wilson, employed around 250 men at its peak, and operated intermittently until 1926. Attempts at oil exploration were less successful. In 1907, after oil was discovered in the yard of the J. M. Chambers Hotel, the railroad drilled a 400-foot well nearby but found only water. In 1911, with the threat of raids from across the Rio Grande during the Mexican Revolution, Marathon became the local center of military operations. Capt. Douglas MacArthur's company was the first to arrive at Marathon, under a special order that authorized the movement of United States Army troops into Texas to aid the civil authorities in maintaining order. MacArthur's company was replaced by troops under Lt. George S. Patton. In 1914 the estimated population of Marathon had grown to 600. Among the businesses operating in the town were the Border Rubber Company, the Chambers Hotel, the Hustler, four cattle breeders, three general stores, a bank, a telephone company, and a pool hall. During the 1920s Marathon was plagued by a series of fires of mysterious origin; arson was suspected, but no suspects were ever apprehended. In 1925 the estimated population had fallen to 218, but two years later had climbed to 1,000. In 1928 oil was again discovered; several test wells were drilled near Marathon, but the results were disappointing. Marathon was not destined to become an oil boomtown, and the estimated population varied from 750 to 1,000 for the next two decades.

Other industries met with more success, at least temporarily. At one time in the late 1940s three wax factories were operating in Marathon, but all three were gone by 1954. The first attempt at commercial beekeeping in Marathon was probably the Bourland Apiary, established in 1917. The production of honey grew over the next three decades and peaked in the 1940s. During the 1940s and 1950s "Min-Sol," a soil conditioner and fertilizer found in southern Brewster County, was crushed and shipped in Marathon, but the factory eventually moved to Alpine. By the late 1940s the population of Marathon had dropped to an estimated 600, where it remained until the early 1960s, when it fell to 500. The population climbed to an estimated 996 in the late 1960s but fell to 800 by the early 1970s. In 1990 the Bailey Fluorspar Company was the only industry operating in Marathon. The town was still a center of the local ranching industry, however, thanks to its location on the Southern Pacific. Marathon is also the principal gateway to Big Bend National Park, thirty-six miles south, for tourists coming from the north on U.S. Highway 385 or from the east on U.S. Highway 90. The population was 800 in 1990.



The Original Bank Vault

Attractions

Post Road - Starting at the center of town, the post road runs south for 5 miles to the Post Park. Marked in 1/2 mile increments, very little traffic, and fabulous views makes this road ideal for running, walking and biking. Wildlife such as deer, javelinas, turkey, or even an occasional fox can be seen in the early mornings or late evenings.

Post Park (pictured at right) - A beautiful secluded pond and County Park on the Pena Colorado river shaded by Cottonwood trees, and surrounded by Los Caballos Novaculite Mountains. Named after the old Cavalry Post in the mid-1800s known as Camp Pena Colorado, it is now very popular amongst the birding communities and is one of the few accessible sources of spring water in the Big Bend region.



Marathon Historical Museum - Displays from the early days of Marathon and its ranching, railroad and industrial history.

Marathon Cemetery - Located at the 1/2 mile mark on the Post Road, the Marathon cemetery is a cemetery enthusiast's dream. A lot can be gleaned about Marathon's colorful past by walking around and noticing the layout and arrangement of the graves, some dating back to the 1800s.

Bank Vault - For many years, the local merchants acted as bankers for their customers. In 1907, the Marathon State Bank was organized. A fire destroyed the building owned by W.J. McIntyre and Sons in June 1920. The vault still remains standing at the rear of what is now the Famous Burro Bar & Grill.

Marathon Jail - A windmill located in the middle of Marathon's North First Street served as an early jail for drunkenness and petty crimes. The offender being chained to a leg of the windmill. Other structures were used to serve as a jail, however, as a result of numerous colorful escapes, it became apparent to the citizens that a better 'Calaboose' was needed. Rocks were then dug from a ledge on the northwest part of town and a jail was built to the south of the old Ritchey store. Upon completion of the upgrades to the cells in Alpine, the old ones were sent to Marathon.

Crinoids Hills - Located at the road cut 5 miles west of Marathon on Hwy 90, digging around in the dirt could turn up fossils of various types deposited when the Marathon Basin was an inland sea.

Dining

From pastries to cappuccino, pizza to Ahi tuna, casual to fine dining if you're hungry or thirsty, chances are, you'll find it in Marathon.

12 Gage -- Welcome to the Gage Experience.

800-884-GAGE or 432-386-4205

102 NW 1ST Street --Hwy 90 West

Marathon, TX 79842

http://www.gagehotel.com/dining_12_gage.html

Big Bend Pizza

If Pizza is your thing, Big Bend Pizza is your place! Vegetarian or meat, homemade crusts and sauces!

432-386-8883

Hwy 90 Across from the Visitor Center

Marathon, TX 79842

Famous Burro Bar and Grill

The Burro is Marathon's local bar and restaurant, offering the perfect forum for visitors to the Big Bend to meet the real West Texas face-to-face.

432-386-4100

Corner of Marathon, TX 79842

<http://www.famousburro.com/marathon-s-local-restaurant-gateway-to-the-big-bend>

Gilda's Grill at J&G Alon

Grab a burger to go while getting gas on your way to Big Bend! Breakfast burritos, hamburgers, chicken sandwiches, fries and soft drinks.

Inside the convenience store — Hamburgers and fries, grilled cheese, cold drinks and beer.

432-386-4238

901 E. Hwy 90 West, Marathon, TX 79842

Johnny B's Old Fashioned Soda Fountain

Take a trip back in time! Full Breakfast and Lunch Menu Everything you'd expect in an old fashioned diner!

Burgers and fries, grilled chicken, salads, chili dogs, malts, shakes, and banana splits. Take out available.

Open 7–3 every day

432-386-4233

Next door to the Gage Hotel

109 North W. 1st St., Marathon, TX 79842

Marathon Coffee Shop

A truly unforgettable Marathon experience! Listen to banjo player Billy Fraier, hang out with the locals and just maybe, get caught up on the local gossip.... Full Breakfast and lunch menu Specialty coffees, fresh baked goods by our 'Guest bakers'. 'Home of the Green Chili Hash Browns'

Open 7 am – 3 pm for breakfast and lunch. Full breakfast menu featuring our popular breakfast enchiladas. Fresh baked goods, gourmet coffees. WiFi.

432-386-4352

Across the street from the Gage Hotel

301 North W. 1st St., Marathon, TX 79842

The French Company Grocer

Groceries, natural foods, beer/wine, hot pizzas, homemade sandwiches/bread/cookies, meat/fish, hardware, toys, camping stuff & Internet with picnic tables on the porch! Open 'til 9pm every night.

432-386-4522

206 N. Ave. D, Marathon, TX 79842

<http://www.frenchcogrocer.com/Home.html>

White Buffalo Bar

The best margaritas in Texas

432-386-4205

102 NW 1ST Street (Hwy 90 West), Marathon, TX 79842

http://www.gagehotel.com/dining_white_buffalo.html

ALPINE

Alpine is a gem. A remote, high-desert jewel nestled in the tall hills of West Texas. It is a friendly, bustling community of a little over 5,000 people in a scenic valley that feels like nowhere else in the state. You'll immediately take note of the natural beauty surrounding the city, if you don't notice the great weather first.

Rated by Texas Highways readers as one of their favorite destinations in the state, this is the perfect spot for you if you're ready to get away from it all, but not ready to do without some familiar amenities.



SUL ROSS STATE UNIVERSITY

Sul Ross—the University of the Big Bend—sits on the western slope of Hancock Hill, overlooking the Alpine valley. Along with irreplaceable contributions to the intellectual and cultural life of the region, Sul Ross boasts one of the most beautiful campuses in the state, or anywhere else for that matter. Founded in 1917 as a teacher's college, SRSU now offers undergraduate and graduate programs in a wide variety of disciplines, and is considered the birthplace of collegiate rodeo.

MUSEUM OF THE BIG BEND

The Museum of the Big Bend is located on the campus of Sul Ross State University. This is a great starting off point for anyone coming to the region for the first time. Highlighting the vast geographical and historical record of the Big Bend region and the communities in it, the museum is a great way to not only get more knowledge but also be inspired to explore more of the sights and activities in and around Alpine.



Photo courtesy of the Museum of the Big Bend

KOKERNOT FIELD AND PARK

Two of those sights and activities are at Kokernot Field. The field, built in 1947, and funded by Herbert L. Kokernot Jr., is still considered by many to be one of the most beautiful ballparks in the country, if not the world. Detailed ironworks, open-air seating and scenic backdrop imbue this stunning red granite structure with a great charm. Kokernot Field is also home to the Alpine Cowboys, a semipro team in the Pecos League. Catch The Cowboys as they take the field through late spring and summer for a small-town baseball showdown.

The field is adjacent to Kokernot Park, the city's largest. In addition to a pool, tennis courts and acres of trails and fields, the park is located near the Alpine Country Club and its 9-hole golf course. The park is also home to the Theatre of the Big Bend, where outdoor performances by Sul Ross's theater program brighten up the stage during summer.



Photo by Mike Marvins

Photo by Adam Holmes

WALK THROUGH THE TOWN

A peaceful walk in the park is a relaxing way to spend your time in Alpine, but a casual stroll through downtown along historic avenues and architecture will reveal plenty of enticing shopping, from inviting boutiques to interesting bookstores and art galleries. Most of downtown Alpine was named a Designated Cultural Art District in 2011 by the Texas Commission on the Arts!

A BITE OF THE BIG BEND REGION

Walking around Alpine is a fantastic way to soak in the local color, and also work up an appetite. Fortunately, there are quite a few options throughout the area for visitors. You might stumble across a flavorful food truck for lunch or make reservations for more fanciful fare at one of our finer dining establishments.

EVERY ROUTE IS THE SCENIC ROUTE

Being at the center of everything in West Texas makes it convenient to bounce around from one locale to another. Catch the rolling hills and mountains of the southbound road to gorgeous Big Bend National Park, the sweeping plains west to art-mecca Marfa, the frontier brush to charming Marathon, and the peaks and twists of the Davis Mountains to quaint Fort Davis.



Photo by Alex Spencer

Day trips will take you to the breathtaking Big Bend National Park, with its stunning vistas and incredible sites. Or the rugged Big Bend Ranch State Park, with spectacular backcountry hiking trails. Close by, the Chihuahuan Desert Nature Center provides scaled-down hikes showcasing the variety of flora and fauna in the regional desert terrain.

If wilderness isn't exactly what you have in mind for a day out, there're also the famous astronomical telescopes of the McDonald Observatory and plenty more within range.

Fort Davis

History

FORT DAVIS, TEXAS. Fort Davis, the county seat of Jeff Davis County, is on Limpia Creek at the intersection of State highways 17 and 118, eighty miles northeast of Presidio and 175 miles southeast of El Paso in south central Jeff Davis County. The precursor of the town was a rough-and-tumble settlement known as Chihuahua, which formed just southwest of the military post of Fort Davis after it was established in 1854. The fort was on the site of an earlier Indian village, which the earliest Anglo-American explorers of the area called Painted Comanche Camp. When Henry Skillman contracted to carry the mail from San Antonio to El Paso in 1850, a stage stand was established near the site of the future town. E. P. Webster, a native of Illinois, and Diedrick Dutchover, a Belgian immigrant who had fought in the Mexican War, rode with W. A. (Big Foot) Wallace to escort the first mail coach to the site, by way of Fort Concho. Webster remained in Limpia Canyon as the first master of the stage station there and may have been the first white settler in the area. Dutchover rode as a guard for two more years before settling at Fort Davis. During the Civil War, when Confederate troops withdrew from the fort, they left Dutchover, who had maintained strict neutrality while establishing a small sheep ranch near the post, in charge. Almost immediately the Apache chief Nicolás attacked the settlement. Dutchover, a Mexican woman with two children, and four Americans hid on the roof for three days while the Apaches looted the fort. On the third night Dutchover and all the others, except one of the Americans, who had fallen ill, slipped out and began the long trek to Presidio, eighty miles away. One day later the stage arrived to find a ravaged fort and the American dead on the roof, apparently of natural causes. Dutchover and the others staggered into Presidio four days later. The Belgian later returned to Fort Davis and was employed as a hauling contractor.



After 1867, when troops of the Ninth United States Cavalry reoccupied the fort, the town of Fort Davis became "the most important town in the Trans-Pecos country," by virtue of its position at the crossroads of two important trails and its status as a base for travelers and hunters. A. J. Buckoz was given permission to serve as post trader in 1867, although he was unceremoniously replaced four years later. Other settlers who came with the return of the troops included storekeeper Dan Murphy, butcher Sam R. Miller, and baker Whitaker Keeseey, who later became the most influential merchant in Fort Davis. Sgt. Charles Mulhern, a native of County Donegal, Ireland, arrived in the late 1870s and eventually acquired a substantial amount of land in the area; he and Gen. Benjamin Grierson, who retired to Fort Davis in 1890, were the only military men who became important local landowners. In the 1880s Fort Davis became a ranching center, as ambitious cattlemen poured into the Trans-Pecos, many of them seeking to escape the Texas fever epidemic raging in other parts of the state.

Although one local historian insisted that "Fort Davis never was a wild town," the place had its share of colorful legends. One involved Dolores Gavino Doport, who as a young woman became engaged to a goatherd named José. While José was out tending his goats she would communicate with him by building a fire every Thursday night on the low mountain just south of town. Shortly before their wedding day José was killed and scalped by Mescaleros while tending his goats in or near Musquiz Canyon. Dolores, overcome with grief, continued to climb the mountain and build her fire every Thursday night for some thirty or forty years. When she died in 1893 she was buried near the path she had worn on her lonely trips up the mountain, which became known as Dolores Mountain.

When Presidio County was organized in April 1871 it included the areas of present Jeff Davis and Brewster counties. Fort Davis was selected as the county seat, but the courthouse later burned and all records of the election were destroyed. Twelve years later, when the Southern Pacific Railroad built through Marfa, twenty-three miles southwest, many felt that the latter town ought to replace Fort Davis as county seat. They disputed the results of the earlier election, for which no records remained. In July 1885

another election was held, and Marfa was proclaimed the victor. The losers immediately began a movement to organize a new county, with Fort Davis as the seat. By this time the town had an estimated 2,000 inhabitants, three lawyers, a milliner, two saloons, two churches, gristmills and cotton gins, and a weekly newspaper called the *Apache Rocket*. Jeff Davis County was established by an act of the legislature on March 15, 1887, and Fort Davis was once again a county seat.

By the early 1890s, after the army abandoned the fort, the town's population fell to an estimated 1,200, and by 1896 it was 500. It grew again in the early twentieth century to 1,061 in 1904 and 1,100 in 1914, by which time the Fort Davis Commercial Club had been established. Beginning in the late 1920s the population fluctuated between an estimated 700 in 1928, 1,200 in 1931, 668 in 1933, and 1,000 in 1936. It remained at the latter figure until the late 1940s, when it again rose to 1,200. In the early 1960s it was down to 850 but by the mid-1970s had grown to 900. In 1990 Fort Davis had a population of 1,212 and sixteen businesses.

Around 1900 the mild climate and location amid the Davis Mountains made Fort Davis a popular summer resort for wealthy Gulf Coast families. Around 1908 the Kansas City, Mexico and Orient Railway proposed building a line to Fort Davis, but the locals protested that it would attract low-class people, and the line was never built. In the late 1920s a group of Oklahoma oilmen decided to turn Fort Davis into a Western movie center, with Jack Hoxie as featured player, but the Great Depression ended that plan. Later attempts to attract visitors met with more success. In May 1946 David A. Simmons of Houston, former president of the American Bar Association, bought the property on which the old fort stood with the intention of restoring it and opening it to the public as a year-round resort. Simmons died in 1951, before his plan could be realized, but in September 1961 Fort Davis National Historic Site came into being; the 460-acre site was formally dedicated in April 1966. A few years later the Chihuahuan Desert Research Institute, headquartered in Alpine, opened an arboretum on a 300-acre tract of land on State Highway 118 just southeast of Fort Davis. Both these attractions, as well as the nearby Davis Mountains State Park and the University of Texas McDonald Observatory, have helped make tourism an important part of the Fort Davis economy.

Chihuahuan Desert Nature Center & Botanical Gardens



The Chihuahuan Desert Nature Center and Botanical Gardens is located on 507-acres, four miles south of Fort Davis on Highway 118. The Center is in a marvelous setting, with views of Mt. Livermore to the north and Blue Mountain to the southwest. "The mission of the Chihuahuan Desert Research Institute is to promote public awareness, appreciation, and concern for the natural diversity of the Chihuahuan Desert through research and education

programs." Known to locals as CDRI, the Center is home to a Visitor's Center, the Leapin' Lizard Gift Shop, an arboretum, and the cactus and succulent greenhouse with over 200 species of Chihuahuan Desert cacti. For those who enjoy hiking, the CDRI offers two, moderately strenuous hikes: the Modesta Canyon Trail, a one-hour hike down a protected canyon to Modesta Canyon Springs, and the Clayton's Overlook hike with spectacular views of the surrounding territory. (432)364-2499. The CDRI is open Monday through Saturday 9 - 5.

Davis Mountains State Park



Davis Mountains State Park is nestled in the foothills of the beautiful Davis Mountains, also referred to as "the Alps of Texas." The park is located only four miles northwest of the historic community of Fort Davis. Davis Mountains SP provides many opportunities for recreational activities, including hiking, camping, mountain biking and equestrian use. It is also a premier spot for bird watching. With an elevation more than a mile high, desert plains grasslands intermingle

with trees typical of the higher mountains, such as piñon, juniper, and oak. Two seasonal creeks, Keesey and Limpia, run through the park and provide important riparian habitat, including extensive cottonwood galleries in the park's Primitive Area. These diverse habitats attract a wide variety of animals. The park's newly renovated interpretive center is open daily and is a prime bird watching venue. Located within the park is the magnificent [Indian Lodge](#), a beautiful pueblo style building built in the 1930's by the Civilian Conservation Corps. The Lodge offers 39 remodeled rooms and is also the home of the Black Bear Restaurant. The park's campground offers full hook-ups, water & electric, and water only sites. Primitive and equestrian campsites are also available. Additionally, the park offers for rent a group picnic area and amphitheater.

Open daily 8 a.m.–10 p.m. Headquarters open 8 a.m.–5 p.m. TX Hwy. 17 to TX Hwy. 118 N. Please call (512) 389-8982 for future reservations and information or 432-426-3337 Admission: \$6 per adult for day use fees; Children 12 & under free.

Fort Davis National Historic Site



Fort Davis National Historic Site, along Texas Highways 17 - 118 at the foot of Sleeping Lion Mountain and Hospital Canyon, is considered perhaps the best preserved of all the 19th Century frontier forts and one of the best preserved "Buffalo Soldier" forts in the west. The site is well maintained and thoughtfully restored with interpretive and historical displays, an excellent book shop and a

museum. Partially restored and fully restored buildings are scattered throughout the 523 acre grounds. Some have period furnishings. Military hobbyists and historians from all over the country visit the Davis Mountains specifically to see the Fort. Three hiking trails climb from the Fort, with two links to the hiking trail at Davis Mountains State Park. Small plaques explain natural features and their value to the Fort when it was active. Self-guided tours daily. Admission is \$3 per person. Hours are 8:00am to 5:00pm. Closed: Christmas Day - *December 25*, New Years Day - *January 1*

Martin Luther King Jr. Birthday Observed - *Third Monday in January*
Thanksgiving Day - *Last Thursday in November*

For more info: Please call: (432)-426-3224 or visit www.nps.gov/foda



H.E. Sproul Ranch



Visit the oldest family owned and operated ranch in Jeff Davis County. Located 7 ½ miles from Fort Davis at 1900 Sproul Rd., this historic working cattle ranch also offers upscale guest accommodations, meeting facilities, custom pool, jeep tours, trap and skeet and hunting, all surrounded by spectacular scenery. Call 432-426-2500 for more information.

Historic Walking/Driving Tour

Venture out among the community and view 23 historic sites. At just 1 ½ miles long this is a journey that starts and ends in the town square. The tour encompasses the longest section of the unpaved Overland-Butterfield mail route.



Indian Lodge, the pueblo-style adobe hotel built in the 1930s by the Civilian Conservation Corps, offers pleasant accommodations, a pool, landscaped grounds and patios, and a "The Black Bear" restaurant. Some rooms have handmade furniture. Indian Lodge has 39 rooms, which are often booked months in advance. Please call (512) 389-8982 for future reservations and information or (432) 426-3254 if arriving today.



McDonald Observatory

The observatory's three largest instruments are the 362" Hobby-Eberly telescope on 6,600-foot Mount Fowlkes, the 107" Harlan J. Smith and 82" Otto Struve telescopes located on 6,800-foot Mt. Locke. The observatory is located just 17 miles from Fort Davis on Texas Highway 118 and under one of the darkest night skies of any major observatory in the continental United States.

Operated by the University of Texas at Austin, the observatory has several large research telescopes and hosts astronomers from around the world. Self-guided tours are possible from 10:00am to 5:30pm. Solar Viewing sessions are conducted twice daily at 11:00am and 2:00pm. (*reservations are strongly encouraged*) Daily tours follow Solar Viewing.

The observatory has evening Star Parties on Tuesdays, Fridays and Saturdays which are led by knowledgeable staffers. (*reservations are strongly encouraged*) A star party showcases interesting stars, planets and other astronomical objects including live views through telescopes from 8 to 24 inches in size. The observatory is closed Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year's Day. Bring a jacket, since the mountain air cools quickly.

A gift shop featuring astronomy related merchandise and the StarDate Cafe are located in the visitor's center. For more information, please call (432)426-3640, Toll Free (877)984-7827 or visit their website at <http://McDonaldObservatory.org>. Accurate information for opening hours and tours can be found at <http://mcdonaldobservatory.org/visitors>



Overland Trail Museum

On Fort and 3rd Streets. The museum is located on the historic San Antonio-El Paso Road/Southern Overland Trail. It contains many unique and varied displays depicting early life in the West including the original Valentine Post Office and telephone switchboard, early medical paraphernalia, a restored pioneer settler's kitchen, an original curling machine, and numerous early photographs of pioneer settlers and buildings. Special tours may be arranged by contacting Pat Draheim (432) 426-3404. The Museum is owned and operated by The Fort Davis Historical Society. HOURS: 1 pm to 5 pm Tuesday through Sunday. Closed on Mondays, closed December, January and February. Educational programs and guided tours available. Donations Accepted

The Gallery at Fort Davis Drug Store

This Fine Art gallery is located upstairs above the Fort Davis Drug Store in downtown Fort Davis, Texas. The Drug Store has long-been a gathering place since it's humble beginnings in 1913. It has been operating in the current building since 1951. The Gallery was added in the spring of 2011 to the existing Hotel, Gift Shop, Restaurant, and Soda Fountain. The Gallery features local artists, and local art of the Big Bend Region, showcasing the art of several well-known artists who make their home in the Fort Davis area including Wayne Baize, Bill Davis, Tim Roberts, Mike Capron, Mary Ann Luedecke and resident artist Patty Moreland. For more information, check out the web site

<http://thegalleryatfortdavisdrugstore.com> or our Facebook page: The Gallery at Fort Davis Drug Store. Contact: 512-627-5943 or email pathazel@yahoo.com.



The Nature Conservancy of Texas - About 10 miles north of the McDonald Observatory on Hwy 118 North (Davis Mountains Preserve). A non-profit wildlife conservation organization, using science-based research and a non-confrontational approach to protect the unique diversity of animals and plants native to our state. The Madera Canyon Trail adjacent to the Lawrence E. Wood Picnic Area is open from dawn to dusk year-round (432) 426-2390,

The Scenic Loop Drive

Fort Davis is the starting point for one of the most scenic and uncrowned drives in Texas and America. Seventy-five miles long, the drive leaves Fort Davis on Texas 118, proceeds up Limpia Canyon past Mts. Locke and Fowlkes and the McDonald Observatory and then into Madera Canyon and a quiet, pine shaded picnic area. After a left turn on Texas 166, the road passes Mt. Livermore and Sawtooth Mountain, then gradually descends past a prominent ridge lined with wind generators toward the southeast side of the mountains, with broad views to the Sierra Viejo Mountains along the Rio Grande to the south. As you approach Fort Davis again on Texas 166, the Puertacita Mountains and Miter Peak are straight ahead.

Highest elevation on the Loop is about 6700 feet, making it the highest public highway in Texas. For a detailed narrative on the Loop, which takes about 1.5 hours to drive, ask for the Fort Davis Texas Visitor's Guide.



Wild Rose Gallery LLC - The gallery at this time features the photography of Robert Haspel. Click the photo to view a page with some samples. The gallery attempts to be open Fridays and Saturdays from 1 to 6 pm, but they welcome the opportunity to open at almost anytime. Call for inquiries: 713-557-4147.



Marfa, Texas

HISTORY OF MARFA

Marfa, the county seat of Presidio County, is at the junction of US Highway 90 and 67 in the northeastern part of the county. It was established in 1883 as a water stop and freight headquarters for the Galveston, Harrisburg and San Antonio Railway. Fittingly named after a character in a novel, Marfa has a history of attracting creative spirits. Reportedly, the wife of a railroad executive suggested the name MARFA from Fyoder Dostoyevsky's *The Brothers Karamazov*, which she was reading at the time.

Marfa is in an area that has been called one of the last American frontiers. It is situated at an altitude of 4,830 feet above sea level in a semiarid region with many dry streambeds that the summer thunderstorms fill and further erode. To the north are the Davis Mountains, to the southeast the Chios Mountains, and to the southwest the Chinati Mountains. Marfa lays semi protected within these escarpments on a great highland plain known as the Marfa Plateau.



The Marfa population continued to grow and in 1930 the town had 3,909 residents during the 1940's the government stationed the Chemical Warfare Brigades in Marfa and constructed a prisoners of war camp nearby. World War II also saw the building of Marfa Army Air Field ten miles east of Marfa; it was an advanced flight-training base. The military installations were closed the next year, however, ending a vital economic and cultural influence to the area.

The United States Border Patrol, Marfa Sector, with offices in the northeastern corner of the former Fort D.A. Russell compound, is responsible for immigration control in seventy-seven counties in West Texas and eighteen counties in Oklahoma a total of 92,000 sq. miles and 365 miles of border.

Until the 1970's, Marfa was best known for the ghost lights and the film location for James Dean's final picture the "GIANT", also starring Rock Hudson, Elizabeth Taylor and Dennis Hopper. The classically beautiful Hotel Paisano, served as the center of activity during the making of the movie. In 1971, Donald Judd, the renowned minimalist artist, moved to Marfa from New York City with the intention of permanently installing his art. Marfa is famous for its excellent soaring conditions even hosting the World Soaring Championship in 1970. And last but not least, don't forget to find your way to viewing station east of town where you can study the mystery of Marfa Ghosts Lights as they dance across the foothills of the Chinati Mountains. Seen by the earlier settlers to the area, they continue to mystify travelers and passersby, and are part of the continuing enigma and magic that is MARFA.

THE ARTS IN MARFA

You won't find a gallery district in Marfa. Rather, you will find sprawling beauty that defies any single definition or interpretation.

They call it minimalism, but the implications are anything but minimal. Simple and ever expansive all at once, Marfa's internationally renowned artworks are inextricably linked with the breathtaking West Texas landscape.



Museums that dare you to think big, really big, as you traverse the grounds of a former military base. Socially relevant works that present the world from a different angle. Museums that pay homage to the unflagging allure of traditional Western art and mythology. With a handful of smaller galleries that are always full of surprises, you need not be daunted by their hours... "By appointment," really means, "It's too beautiful outside to sit inside all day, but please call and we'll show you around."

From sparse, large-scale visual drama to a performance about making the perfect tortilla, the art here won't tell you what to think, but it might get you thinking.



ARBER & SON EDITIONS

128 E. El Paso St.
Marfa, Texas 79843

432-729-3981

<http://www.30x30cmproject.com/index1.html>

Tamarind Master Printer, Robert Arber. Robert Arber has produced limited edition lithographs and woodcuts for numerous, internationally known artists including Donald Judd, Bruce Nauman, John Baldessari, Ilya Kabakov, Richard Prince, Al Taylor and David Rabinowitch. Open most days or call for an appointment.



AYN FOUNDATION (Das Maximum)

107- 109 N. Highland Ave.,
Brite Bldg.
Marfa, Texas 79843

432-729-3315

www.aynfoundation.com

Presenting "Last Supper" by Andy Warhol and "September Eleven" by Maria Zerres. Open weekends all year and by appointment. Please call or email for hours or an appointment.



BALLROOM MARFA

108 E. San Antonio
Marfa, Texas 79843

432-729-3600
www.ballroommarfa.org

Ballroom Marfa is a non-profit cultural space dedicated to presenting leading and cutting edge artists working in the visual arts, performance, film, and music. The Ballroom provides a youthful, festive and colorful balance to the established Marfa art scene, and has emerged as a hub for artistic activity in the region.



BROTHERS FINE ART MARFA

Christa Brothers
208 West Texas Street
P. O. Box 1554
Marfa, Texas 79843

432-729-4327 or
210-379-8743

Brothers Fine Art Marfa, presents contemporary art work from national, international, and artists residing in Marfa with an emphasis on supporting creative spirits and a welcoming atmosphere.



CHINATI FOUNDATION

1 Cavalry Row
Marfa, Texas 79843

432-729-4362
www.chinati.org

Chinati is an internationally known contemporary art museum founded by minimalist artist Donald Judd. It exhibits large scale installations by a limited number of artists on the grounds of Fort D. A. Russell and in buildings in the town of Marfa. Chinati features paintings, sculptures, poems, installations, drawings and other works by renowned artists Donald Judd, John Chamberlain, Claus Oldenburg & Choose van Bruggen, Dan Flavin, Ilya Kabakov, Roni Horn and many more. Public tours available Wed.- Sun. 10-12 and 2- 4.



exhibitions 2d

400 S. Highland Ave.
Marfa, Texas 79843

432-729-1910

www.exhibitions2d.com

A contemporary exhibition space presenting paintings, drawings, sculptures and installations by noted American artists. The space is characterized by minimalist installation and an atmosphere conducive to quiet reflection and contemplation of the work.



GREASEWOOD GALLERY

at the Hotel Paisano
207 North Highland
Marfa, TX 79843

432-729-4134

www.hotelpaisano.com

Located in the historic Hotel Paisano, the gallery features regional artists in varied media. Multiple shows are hosted each year, check the website for details. Hours: Daily 9 am- 6 pm



HACIENDA DEL ARCON

705 W. Bonnie St.
Marfa, TX 79843

432-729-4826

www.haciendadelarcon.org

The headquarters for the International Woman's Foundation, Hacienda del Arcon is a premier training center for artistic development and healthful aging. The former Officers Club and BOQ of Fort D.A. Russell, building 98 is a venue for artist presentations, showings and special events. Murals painted by WWII German POWs depict scenes of the Chihuahuan Desert. Tours are by appointment only.



INDE/JACOBS GALLERY

208 E. San Antonio
Marfa, TX 798743

432-729-3162

www.indejacobs.com

Fine art and photography by Donald Judd, Carl Andre, John Chamberlain and other artists associated with Chinati; plus other post '60's artists. Photography by Ellen Carey, Nan Goldin and others.



JUDD FOUNDATION

104 South Highland Avenue
Marfa, TX 79843

432-729-4406

<http://www.juddfoundation.org>

For Tour information, please see the Judd Foundation website.



MARFA CONTEMPORARY

100 East San Antonio Street
Marfa, Texas 79843

www.marfacontemporary.org

The latest addition the heart of Marfa. Featuring art, education and an artist in residence program. The building is also home to Pizza Foundation. At the corner of Hwy 90 and Hwy 67/17.



MARFA STUDIO OF ARTS

Sites Children's Gallery
106 E. San Antonio St
Marfa, TX 79843

432-729-4616

www.marfastudioofarts.org

The Marfa Studio of arts is a non-profit organization that provides visual art classes and activities to children and teens through the school, afterschool and summer programs. Includes children's gallery featuring artworks developed in SITES (Studio in the Elementary School).

NEW STAR GROCERY ART MUSEUM

301 West Dallas Street
Marfa, Texas 79843



Open Thursday-Saturday from 12:00noon-3:00pm



RULE GALLERY

204 E. San Antonio St.
Marfa, Texas 79843

303-800-6776

www.rulegallery.com

Open by appointment - Call for more information

Information was gathered from the following websites:

<http://visitbigbend.com/>
<https://www.cbp.gov/travel/international-visitors/esta>
<https://travel.state.gov/content/passports/en/passports/forms.html>
<https://travel.state.gov/content/passports/en/passports/information/card.html>
<http://www.alpineautorental.com/>
<http://www.terlinguaranch.com/attractions.htm>
<http://tpwd.texas.gov/state-parks/parks/things-to-do/swimming-safety>
<http://tpwd.texas.gov/state-parks/parks/park-rules>
<http://tpwd.texas.gov/state-parks/big-bend-ranch/dog-policies>
<http://tpwd.texas.gov/state-parks/barton-warnock>
https://www.nps.gov/bibe/planyourvisit/bc_horses.htm
<https://www.nps.gov/bibe/index.htm>
<http://rioaviation.com/>
<http://www.paintedfeatherstudiogallery.com/>
http://www.stoneplanters.com/wp/?page_id=604
<http://www.lajitasgolfresort.com/default.aspx?pg=dining>
<http://www.lajitasstables.com/bbstables.html>
<http://bigbendfarflung.com/>
<https://www.nps.gov/bibe/index.htm>
<https://www.cbp.gov/travel/us-citizens/western-hemisphere-travel-initiative#>
<https://tpwd.texas.gov/state-parks/big-bend-ranch>
<https://tpwd.texas.gov/state-parks/fort-leaton>
http://tpwd.texas.gov/publications/pwdpubs/media/pwd_lf_p4501_0152q.pdf
<http://tpwd.texas.gov/state-parks/barton-warnock>
<http://tpwd.texas.gov/state-parks/fort-leaton>
http://tpwd.texas.gov/huntwild/hunt/wma/find_a_wma/list/?id=7
<http://angellexpeditions.com/>
<http://www.bigbendrivertours.com/>
<http://chisosmountainslodge.com/tours>
<http://www.lajitasstables.com/bbstables.html>
<http://www.desertsportstx.com/>
<http://bigbendfarflung.com/>
<http://www.lajitasgolfresort.com/>
www.texaslonghorn.com
<http://www.visitmarathontexas.com/>
<http://visitalpinetx.com/alpine-overview/>
<http://www.fortdavis.com/>

The information on the previous pages are only as up to date as their websites. Please let me know if something should be changed.