

# Remember The Alamo

But don't forget there's more to see in San Antonio

By Mary Welch

**M**ention San Antonio, Texas, to most people and the responses tend to be the same – the River Walk and the Alamo. However, there is much more to this star of the Texas Hill Country.

San Antonio is a perfect weekend getaway

restaurant serves locals, tourists and celebrities with equal flourish, all of whom enjoy such Mexican specialties as chile rellenos, chorizo and eggs and huevos rancheros surrounded by Christmas lights and serenaded by mariachis. They also have a great panaderia (bakery) for fresh breakfast pastries, Mexican breads and sweet rolls, and a bar that serves a number

Latinos in America, including the strict racial codes that many believe still influence the culture even today.

The city is rich in museums, and the McNay Art Museum offers a wide-ranging collection from post-impressionist and modern pieces to Native American works.

The San Antonio Museum of Art, housed in a castle-like building that was the former Lone Star Brewery, is noted for its antiquities collections and the 30,000-square-foot Nelson A. Rockefeller Center for Latin American art, the largest of its kind.

Opening up later this summer is the Briscoe Western Art Museum that will boast more than 40,000 square feet of gallery and exhibition areas devoted to the art, history and people of the American West.

For groups large and small, the Historic Sunset Station, built in 1902 as the Southern Pacific Railroad Depot, is unique. Nestled in the historic St. Paul District, the 10-acre event facility features The Spire, a 1994 church building, the Crown, a three-story hotel and the Depot, which has ornate vaulted ceilings and stained-glass windows.

While there, dine at Aldaco's Mexican Cuisine, whose rooms once served as the train station's storage room and the "colored" waiting room during the years of segregation. Today, it offers a variety of local cuisine, and for groups it will do a class on making margaritas, especially the restaurant's signature avocado margarita.

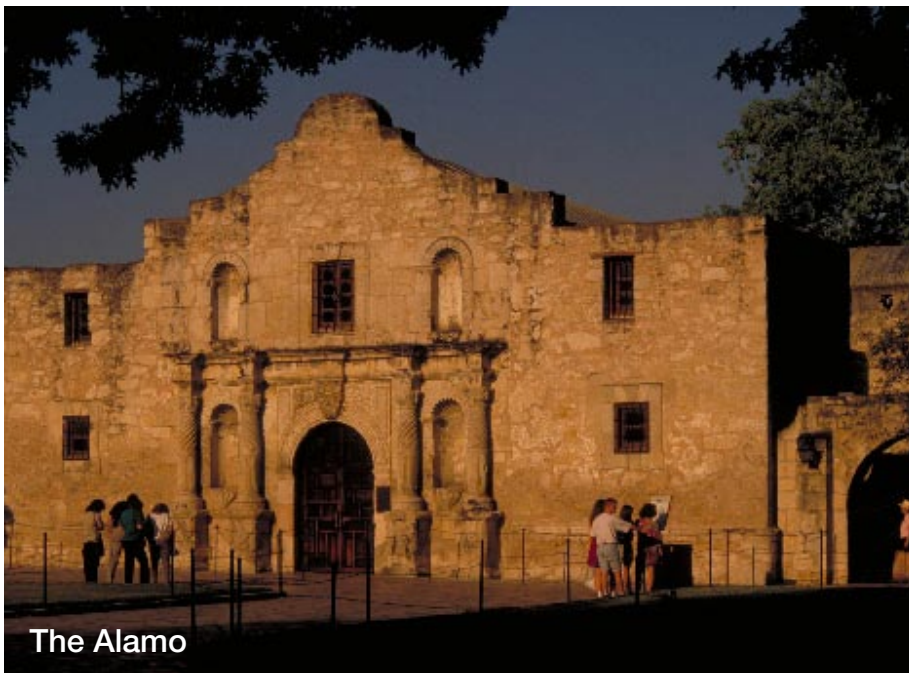


Photo by Nancy Belcher

The Alamo

or spot for a business meeting because of its variety of attractions, sporting events and venues perfect for anything from a sales meeting to a large convention.

We decided to stay outside the city and anchored our visit at the Westin La Cantera Resort, home to the PGA Tour's Valero Texas Open and named by Condé Nast Traveler as one of the 100 best golf resorts in the world. Located near Six Flags Fiesta Texas, the resort recently underwent a \$10 million renovation.

Start the day at a landmark Mi Tierra, a third-generation, family-owned 24-hour restaurant at Market Square that has been a local favorite since 1941. The 500-seat

of local tequilas and beers.

Spend some time at Market Square (yes, it's a bit touristy), which has hundreds of stalls that sell anything from pearls to piñatas. Bargaining is a must. Market Square, which is the largest Mexican marketplace north of the Rio Grande, dates to 1840. While there, slip into the Museo Alameda, a Smithsonian-affiliate that tells the story of



Photo by Morris Goen

The River Walk

Even though San Antonio offers a variety of culinary, entertainment, cultural, sporting and shopping alternatives, there is a pull to return to the area's two landmarks.

Many are surprised to see that the Alamo is located downtown. Although our guide spent much of his time talking about the John Wayne movie (which none in our group had seen), it still is a sobering sight where 189 defenders of Texas independence held the old mission against some 4,000 Mexican troops for 13 days. Davy Crockett's personal items are there as well as those of the other fighters, many of whom came from Georgia and Tennessee as well as Europe. There even were women and children living at the mission, but their story is rarely told.

After a short visit to the Alamo, walk down to the River Walk, the cobble- and flagstone path



Photo by Tom Becker

that border two miles of the San Antonio River, 20 feet below street level.

The River Walk is a festive area full of hotels, shops, restaurants and office buildings. Plans are to extend the River Walk to 13 miles. That will create a water route from the original River Walk to San Antonio's four Spanish colonial missions to the south as well as to museums, the historic Pearl Brewery and cultural attractions, including the San Antonio Art Museum, to the north.

A favorite way to see the sights and people is to take a cruise on the river. Boudro's Restaurant offers private barge rides, complete with lunch or dinner, and a server on board who makes guacamole and a driver who offers local commentary that may or may not be entirely true, but fun nevertheless.

After a stay in San Antonio, a visitor will have more than just the Alamo to remember. ♀

## If you go there:

### Places to Stay:

- The 1,003-room **Grand Hyatt** just opened downtown and it Grand Hyatt features 115,000 square feet of indoor/outdoor meeting space, much of which overlooks the River Walk as well as 29 meeting rooms, a 32,000-square-foot main ballroom and a 21,000-square-foot ballroom. [www.sanantonioregency@hyatt.com](http://www.sanantonioregency@hyatt.com).
- Named by *Condé Nast Traveler* as one of "The 100 Best Golf Resorts in the World," the **Westin La Cantera Resort** (home to the PGA Tour's Valero Texas Open) offers a view of town and country. The property's views encompass not only rich Hill Country terrain but also downtown San Antonio. [www.WestinLaCantera.com](http://www.WestinLaCantera.com).
- Within the heart of San Antonio, the five-star **Watermark Hotel & Spa** features a second floor devoted to the spa. The hotel is named by *Condé Nast Traveler* as one of the world's best hotels. [www.watermarkhotel.com](http://www.watermarkhotel.com).

### Arts and Culture:

- The **McNay Art Museum** has wide-ranging collections, including post-impressionist and modern pieces, theater-centered works, medieval offerings and Native American art. [www.mcnayart.org](http://www.mcnayart.org).
- The **San Antonio Museum of Art** is housed in a castle-like building and is noted for its antiquities collections. [www.Samuseum.org](http://www.Samuseum.org).
- The **Museo Alameda** in historic Market Square is the largest Latino museum in the country. [www.thealameda.org](http://www.thealameda.org).
- The **Witte Museum** features South Texas history, culture and natural science. The Witte offers exhibits that include dinosaur skeletons, cave drawings, wildlife dioramas and several historic homes. [www.witemuseum.org](http://www.witemuseum.org).

### Family Fun:

- At **SeaWorld San Antonio**, not only can you meet Shamu and feed the dolphins, but you can also see beluga whales, penguins, sea lions or cool down in the water park with wave pools, lazy rivers and water slides. [www.seaworld.com](http://www.seaworld.com).
- Just down the road, **Six Flags Fiesta Texas** is features Goliath, the suspended roller coaster that brings their coaster count up to eight, and take a dip in a Texas-shaped pool in the White Water Bay water park. [www.sixflags.com/fiestaTexas.com](http://www.sixflags.com/fiestaTexas.com).
- **Schlitterbahn** has been ranked the No.1 water park in the world, according to the Travel Channel. Located on the banks of the spring-fed Comal River, Schlitterbahn has tube chutes, water slides, uphill water coasters and more. [www.schlitterbahn.com](http://www.schlitterbahn.com).

### General Information:

[www.visitsanantonio.com](http://www.visitsanantonio.com)