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## Abilene



Immerse yourself in the tall tales and mysteries of the Wild West, and discover a place where characters from classic children's stories come to life: [Abilene](#). Since the beginning, this decidedly West Texas town has embodied the spirit of the frontier. These days, it offers so much more. Explore one-of-a-kind historic sites, discover why Abilene is the “Official Storybook Capital of America,” hand feed a giraffe at the Abilene Zoo, and take on one of the best public golf courses in the Lone Star State. Regardless of your age or interests, you'll find an adventure that you'll remember for a lifetime when you visit Abilene.

Back in the 1950's, songwriter Bob Gibson penned a song about Abilene that went something like this: *“I sit alone most every night, I watch those trains pull out of sight. Don't I wish they were carrying me back to*

*Abilene, my Abilene.”* An appropriate tune for a town that was founded as a stop along the Texas and Pacific railroad tracks in the 1880's. Yet even before that, the Abilene area was a gateway to West Texas once home to Native American tribes and a U.S. Army fort. Although the railroad brought a large town to the area, the indomitable frontier spirit of West Texas remains in Abilene.

Experience it for yourself at [Frontier Texas!](#), a world-class museum where the eccentric characters of the Old West come to life via life-sized holographic exhibits. Then tour the 20 historical buildings and check out the vast collection of firearms and Native American artifacts in the Buffalo Gap Historic Village. Finally, stroll between the rows of solitary chimneys at the ghostly [Fort Phantom Hill](#), an 1850's military outpost established to protect settlers and travelers heading into the West Texas frontier.

For a different type of adventure, head to downtown Abilene for a scavenger hunt like none other. Wander the streets and you just might see the majestically mustachioed Lorax, the always-up-to-no-good Cat in the Hat, or any of the other 40+ statues of memorable characters from timeless children's tales. These statues are part of why Abilene was designated as the “Official Storybook Capital of America,” and it embraces its status with the Children's Art and Literacy Festival in June. Of course, there's much more to see and do in downtown Abilene. Check out the exhibits at The [National Center for Children's Illustrated Literature](#), the

[12th Armored Division Memorial Museum](#), and [The Grace Museum](#), or catch a film at the [Paramount Theatre](#).

No trip would be complete without a bit of a walk on the wild side, and you can do just that at the [Abilene Zoo](#). Tour the grounds and you'll encounter lions, tigers, bears, a host of birds and reptiles, and about 1,000 other animals representing about 250 species. Along with the zoo, Abilene also has some of the best golf in West Texas. [Live Oak Golf Course](#) is one of the three 18-hole courses in Abilene and designed by World-renowned 1971 Masters Champion, Charles Coody. For even more outdoor fun, get your fishing rod and snare some catfish and bass at Lake Fort Phantom Hill, Kirby Lake, and Lytle Lake.

Abilene embraces its Western history and heritage while also providing plenty more to keep travelers of all types entertained. Plan your next trip here to enjoy some of the best of West Texas.