



Beaumont, Texas
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TEXAS FRIENDLY. BAYOU FUN.

Things to do in Beaumont

Beaumont is a lively Texas town big on fun, history, and nature, all served with a unique mix of cowboy charm and Cajun flair. For many years, Beaumont has been the home of frontiersman, farmers, oil prospectors, musicians, and athletes, all of whom have left an indelible mark on the town. The evidence of this is all over the place, from beautifully restored homes to remarkable churches and quirky roadside monuments. In many ways, Beaumont has a unique take on the old and the new, making any trip here an unforgettable experience.

Outside of town, there are thousands of acres of picturesque forests and marshlands to explore, as well as a range of other experiences you just wouldn't get anywhere else. Whether you're planning a long stay or just passing through, read on to discover the things to do in Beaumont that you can't miss.

Experience Historic Beaumont



Texas.

Beaumont is as old as the state of Texas, and its history is just as vibrant. In its nearly 180 years of existence, Beaumont has evolved from a frontier settlement to a booming oil and shipping town while also being the birthplace of famous athletes and musicians. One of the best ways to experience Beaumont's rich history is by visiting its many museums and historic sites, such as the [John Jay French Museum](#), a home built in 1845 that is one of the oldest surviving houses in town. This museum, filled with antique furnishings and period clothing, provides a glimpse of frontier living in southeast

Step forward about 60 years to [The Chambers House](#) and the [McFaddin-Ward House](#), two stunning homes and museums originally built in 1906. Both homes provide a fascinating look at life in Beaumont at the turn of the 20th century, but from a different perspective. The McFaddin-Ward House provides a look at the life of a family with extravagant wealth, while The Chambers House offers insight into the middle-class experience at the time.

The discovery of oil in 1901 shaped Beaumont into what it is today. That chapter of the town's history is immortalized in the [Spindletop-Gladys City Boomtown Museum](#), which features authentically reproduced buildings and the only working replica oil gusher in the world. For something a bit different, stop by the [Babe Didrikson Zaharias Museum](#), a museum built to commemorate the accomplishments of Beaumont's own female athlete, Babe Didrikson Zaharias. Believe it or not, these are just a few of the museums in Beaumont that you can visit. Check out our attractions page for a full list.

Check out Beaumont's Roadside Attractions

There's nothing more Texan than a quirky roadside statue, and Beaumont has several that are worth seeing. The most famous is Big Beau, a 135-foot alligator that sits at the entrance to the Gator Country Wildlife Adventure Park. Another is the Happy Half Wit, a 25-foot-tall statue modeled after Alfred E. Neuman, the well-known MAD Magazine character. The Dalmatian Hydrant, a 24-foot-tall spotted fire hydrant at the Fire Museum of Texas in downtown Beaumont, and the Lucas Gusher Replica at the Spindletop-Gladys City Boomtown Museum are Beaumont's other roadside attractions. To see all of them in one trip, start at the Lucas Gusher Replica, head up Highway 287 into downtown Beaumont for Happy Half Wit and the Dalmatian Hydrant, and then head town I-10 to meet Big Beau. And while you're there, you can ...



Hold an Alligator at Gator Country Adventure Park



Yes, you read that right. You can hold a real live alligator. In most cases, such a close encounter is rare. But at the [Gator Country Adventure Park](#), it's all part of the fun. The park, famously featured on the CMT show *Gator 911*, affords visitors an interactive and highly educational experience. Along with the more than 350 alligators, you'll see demonstrations with crocodiles, caimans, turtles, tortoises, pythons, and other types of animals. Yet the real star of the show just might be "Big Al," a 14-foot-long, 1,000-pound beast that is the largest alligator in captivity in Texas. Gator Country also provides a guided swamp tour that takes you through

the Taylor Bayou, where you'll enjoy majestic views of moss-covered cypress trees and the wildlife that resides there.

Marvel at the Architecture

If the words "art deco" or "Richardsonian-Romanesque" mean anything to you, then you'll be delighted by Beaumont's rich architecture. Many of Beaumont's most photogenic buildings are located throughout the town's commercial district. One of the best examples of this is the St. Anthony Cathedral Basilica, a stunning red-brick church modeled after St. Paul's Basilica in Rome. The pointed towers and long rectangular windows of the Tyrrell Historical Library, located in a former Baptist church built in 1903 in the Richardsonian-Romanesque style out of limestone, offers an intriguing counterpoint to St. Anthony's. Beaumont's Jefferson County Courthouse and the First National Bank Building, on the other hand, are wonderful examples of the art deco style. For the most part, you can see all of these buildings from your car. But why would you want to? After all, it's much easier to take pictures when you aren't driving.



Enjoy the Great Outdoors



The dense oak forests and sprawling cypress swamps surrounding Beaumont provide much to explore for those that love the great outdoors. Start at [Big Thicket National Preserve](#), a more-than 100,000-acre natural area home to nine different ecosystems and everything from cactuses and beech trees to alligators and bison. The diversity of flora fauna has made Big Thicket National Preserve an important



wildlife area, which is why in 1981 UNESCO designated it as a Biosphere Reserve.

That's all well and good, but what can you do here? For starters, there are more than 40 miles of hiking trails to explore the varied landscapes within the preserve. Since Big Thicket is so dense with plant and animal life, photography and bird watching are popular things to do here. Kayaking and paddling on Village Creek and the Neches River, fishing, hunting, and biking are good options as well. Big Thicket National Preserve is located about 35 miles north of Beaumont off of Highway 287. Admission is free and the preserve is open all year.

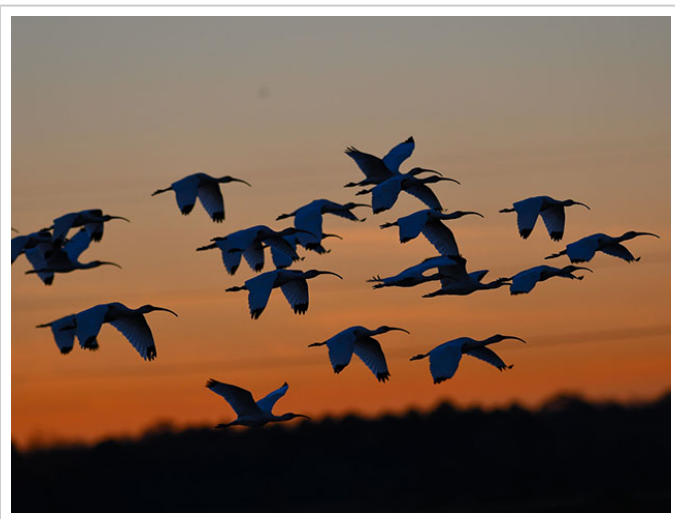
Explore the Wetlands of the Gulf Coast

Stretching out into picturesque wetlands, the wooden pathway of the [Cattail Marsh Scenic Wetlands & Boardwalk](#) serves up some of the best birdwatching in Texas. Covering 900 acres of Gulf Coast wetlands, this part of Tyrrell Park attracts more than 250 species of birds throughout the year, including pelicans, egrets, and roseate spoonbills. Bring your binoculars or long-lense camera and watch as these birds wade or hunt from the boardwalk, then explore more than eight miles of trails on the banks of the Hildebrandt and Willow Marsh bayous that are ideal for biking, hiking, jogging, and admiring nature.



Open seven days a week from early in the morning to well into the evening, you can get here early enough to catch a sunrise and stay long enough for a remarkable sunset.

Embark on Your Own Birdwatching Adventure



the warblers.

Located in the Central and Mississippi flyways and home to an array of ecosystems, Beaumont is in prime Texas birdwatching territory. From pine forests to the beaches of the Gulf Coast, there are in excess of 350 bird species spotted here throughout the year, including during peak migration in the spring and fall. From October through March, more than 30 kinds of ducks and flocks of snow geese arrive in the Beaumont area. Roseate spoonbills, great and snowy egrets, and mottled ducks are among the many species you can see here throughout the year. The Big Thicket National Preserve and Cattail Marsh Scenic Wetlands & Boardwalk are great starting points, but you should also head to [High Island](#) for the waterbirds or [Sabine Woods](#) for

These are just a few of the birding hotspots you can easily reach from Beaumont. [See the others here.](#)