

BACK ROADS TO THE BEACHES OF TEXAS ITINERARY (1 or 2-Day Tour)

Great for the motor coach groups departing San Antonio who would like to experience more than just the interstate.

Heading toward Corpus Christi (and 113 miles of beaches), depart San Antonio taking Highway 181 for the short trip to Floresville, TX. In the spring-time, you will see our famous roadside wildflowers, including Texas bluebonnets, Indian paintbrushes, and maybe even a bloomin' prickly pear cactus.

First stop is the Promised Land Dairy. Watch a jersey cow being milked or take a tour of the bottling facility. How about a 20-minute hayride that'll make you feel like a kid again? Don't forget to stop in the 50's style Deli, Ice Cream & Gift Shop and enjoy some refreshing, hand-dipped ice cream, a malt or flavored milk shake, or a big banana split.

As you continue down Highway 181, your next stop is Panna Maria, home of 'The Oldest Polish Permanent Settlement in the USA.' Panna Maria is a Texas Landmark with four individual Historic Building Markers and two site markers. The Panna Maria Historical Society gives educational tours to visiting groups.

Nearby is the town of Helena. Once a boisterous frontier settlement, it is now a ghost town—killed, they say, by one gunfight too many. The abandoned courthouse is now a museum with several surrounding historic buildings, including a small turn-of-the -century farmhouse, a barn, the old post office, and one of the four original jail cells.

The road from Helena to Karnes City on Highway 80 is filled with an array of color during the spring months as the Texas wildflowers are in bloom. The young town was first named Karnes in honor of Henry Wax Karnes, a Texas Ranger hero. Karnes was noticeable for his cool courage in battle. Red-headed, he was once besieged by a group of Comanche women who attempted to wash the berry juice out of his hair. A short drive down the road, your group might stop and enjoy some home cookin' at Barth's Restaruant located in Kenedy.

In the early 1900's, Mifflin Kenedy gained a reputation for gun-fighting that earned him the nickname "Six-Shooter Junction." During World War II, a detention camp was located on the outskirts of town. Although the camp has since deteriorated, you can find a few marked graves. You might even want to visit the local Horned Toad Museum and learn more about this endangered species.

From Kenedy, it's on to Goliad, the third oldest Spanish settlement in Texas. The downtown area has been declared a National Historic District. The most fought over fort in the history of Texas, Presidio La Bahia "Fort of the Bay" proudly flies the nine flags representing its various occupations since 1721. Mission Espiritu Santo was founded in 1722 to serve the Kawakawa Indians and

their allies. The darkest day in Texas history took place on Palm Sunday, 1836 when Col. James Fannin and 341 men under his command were executed a week after their surrender at the Battle of Coleto under order of the Mexican dictator, General Santa Anna.

Experience the wonder of Berclair Mansion located just outside of Goliad on Highway 59; a 75-year old widow named Etta Wilkinson Terrell built the mansion. This 22 room, 10,000 square feet fireproof house was shared by Miss Etta and her four sisters, three who were spinsters and the fourth was a widow with two children. The mansion is filled with 15th and 17th century antiques, some straight from European castles. After the last sister's death, the house was unoccupied, but with the furnishings intact, for almost 20 years. In the last will of Genevieve Moore, who was the daughter of the widow who died in 1968, the house and all of its contents was to be destroyed. Legal battles raged among the distant relatives to save the house, and in December 1999 the house became the lawful property of the Beeville Art Association.

Beeville, called the "The Friendly City," is the home of several quaint shops offering the wares of many local artisans. Beeville also boasts the stately Bee County Courthouse, and the Beeville Art Museum & Gallery.

From Beeville, it's time to head to Corpus Christi for some fun in the sun. Enjoy endless miles of sandy beaches; tour the "Blue Ghost," the most decorated aircraft carrier from World War II; see the sea life at the Texas State Aquarium, the only aquarium dedicated to the Gulf of Mexico; and so much more.

Corpus Christi Convention & Visitors Bureau

www.corpuschristicvb.com

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