

RV TRIPGEN

The Complete Guide to RV Travel in **Texas**

85 mph toll roads, Big Bend remoteness, Rio Grande Valley snowbird country, hurricane season on the coast, and 800-mile drives across one state.

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RV travel in Texas

Texas is the longest haul of any continental US state. El Paso to Texarkana is 800 miles on I-20, the Panhandle to Brownsville is 950 miles on I-27 + I-37, and most of those miles are open road with steady fuel and friendly RV parks. The state runs the largest state-park system in the country, the Big Bend country in the southwest is genuinely remote, and the Rio Grande Valley is the biggest snowbird destination in the US after Arizona. The catch is heat: Jun-Sep, most of the state runs 100-110 F daily, and hurricane season Jun-Nov can shut the entire coast inside 48 hours of a landfall warning. October through May is the season; outside that, plan for AC capacity and a backup inland route.

Texas by the numbers

Boondocking + dispersed sites	1,166
Established campgrounds	673
Dump stations	111
Propane refills	128
Potable water fill-ups	244
Laundromats	117
RV showers	58
Verified-bad spots (overnight prohibited)	62

Source: iOverlander community database (64% of Texas spots verified in the last 24 months).

Driving rules

Interstate (cars + RVs)	75 mph (most rural segments); 80 mph on parts of I-10/I-20 west of San Antonio
Toll road TX-130 (Austin-San Antonio segment)	85 mph (highest posted in US)
Interstate (towing)	Matches posted (no separate trailer limit)
US/State highway (cars + towing)	70-75 mph (posted)
Built-up areas	30-40 mph (posted)
Drive on	Right
Cell phone use while driving	Texting prohibited statewide; hands-free required in many cities (Austin, San Antonio, El Paso, Dallas)

Seatbelts	Required for all occupants
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Highways

RV-friendly corridors

Highway	Note
I-10	El Paso to Houston to the Louisiana line, 880 miles. Long, flat, easy. Long fuel gaps west of Fort Stockton -- top up there before heading west.
I-20	Mid-state spine, Midland to Tyler. Easy big-rig route.
I-35	San Antonio to Austin to Dallas. Heavy construction and traffic; expect 2-3 hour delays through Austin in rush hour. The TX-130 toll bypass east of Austin is the recommended RV route.
I-37 / US-77 / US-281	San Antonio to Corpus Christi / RGV. Easy drive; full hookups dense once you reach the snowbird belt.
I-40	Panhandle east-west via Amarillo. Long, flat, windy. Watch crosswinds near Amarillo and Vega.
US-90 (Del Rio to Marathon)	Quiet alternative to I-10 through southwest TX. Big-rig OK; fuel gaps require planning.

RV-restricted segments

Segment	Restriction
TX-118 + TX-170 (River Road, Big Bend Ranch SP)	TX-170 (FM-170, 'River Road') Lajitas to Presidio is paved but has 15% grades and tight curves. RVs over 30 ft are strongly discouraged.
FM-2627 + Old Maverick Road (Big Bend NP)	Unpaved, washboard, occasional water crossings after rain. Tow vehicles only.
US-67 over the Davis Mountains	Paved but tight switchbacks above Fort Davis. Big rigs OK with patience; not for nervous drivers.
FM-2810 (Pinto Canyon Road)	Mostly unpaved gateway to the Chinati Mountains. Not for RVs.
Many Hill Country FM roads (e.g. FM-337, FM-4)	Tight, low-clearance bridges, sharp twists. RVs over 30 ft should plan around the Hill Country, not through it.

Mountain passes

Pass	Elevation	Note
Guadalupe Pass (US-62/180)	5695 ft	Highest paved pass in TX. Open year-round; occasional closures in winter ice; severe crosswinds.

Davis Mountains (TX-118)	6000 ft	Roughly. Tight curves; closed sections rare but possible after winter storms.
McKittrick Canyon access	5500 ft	Within Guadalupe Mountains NP; tow-vehicle access only.

National parks + monuments

National Park / Monument	Entry fee	Reservation note
Big Bend NP	\$30/vehicle (7 days), \$80 America the Beautiful annual	Three campgrounds: Rio Grande Village (rigs to 40 ft full-hookup, reservable), Chisos Basin (rigs to 24 ft -- the road in is steep with a switchback), Cottonwood (no hookups, primitive). All reservable Nov-Apr peak season via recreation.gov, often booked 6 months ahead. Closest fuel/groceries are 30+ miles outside the park.
Guadalupe Mountains NP	\$10/person (7 days)	Pine Springs Campground first-come; rigs to 30 ft. Dog Canyon on the north end is more remote. The Salt Basin Dunes area is unpaved access.
Padre Island National Seashore	\$25/vehicle (7 days)	Malaquite Campground reservable; rigs to 50 ft on the paved sites. Free dispersed beach camping is permitted on the 60 miles of undeveloped beach if your tyres can handle the soft sand (4WD strongly advised; recovery is on you).
San Antonio Missions NHP	Free entry	No camping inside; multiple commercial RV parks within 10 miles.
Big Thicket National Preserve	Free entry	No NPS campgrounds; backcountry permits available. Stay at TX state parks (Martin Dies Jr) or commercial.
Lake Meredith NRA + Alibates Flint Quarries NM	Free entry	Multiple primitive campgrounds around Lake Meredith; Sanford Dam area is most RV-friendly. Free.
Lyndon B Johnson NHP (Stonewall + Johnson City)	Free entry	No camping inside; nearby Pedernales Falls SP.
Amistad NRA (Del Rio)	\$10/vehicle (7 days)	Multiple primitive RV-accessible campgrounds. Boat-launch sites only at some.
Waco Mammoth NM	\$5/person	No camping; visit and stay nearby.

State parks

Texas Parks and Wildlife operates 80+ state parks, the second-largest state-park system in the country by acreage after California. Reservations open 5 months ahead at tpwd.texas.gov. Day-use \$4-12. Camping \$15-50. Highlights for big-rig RVers: Palo Duro Canyon (panhandle, the 'Grand Canyon of Texas'), Big

Bend Ranch SP (vast and primitive, adjacent to Big Bend NP), Garner SP (Hill Country), Caprock Canyons (panhandle), Goose Island (coastal), Pedernales Falls, Inks Lake, Mustang Island, Bastrop. The Texas State Parks Pass (\$70/year) waives day-use fees and is worth it for any trip over a week.

Boondocking + dispersed camping

BLM: Texas has very little federal land. BLM holdings are minor (a few acres in the Cross Timbers area + scattered minerals tracts). Free dispersed boondocking on federal land is essentially not a TX option. Workarounds: free overnight at TX rest areas (24-hour limit officially, 'no camping' but RV self-contained overnight is generally tolerated), Walmart / Cracker Barrel / Cabela's overnight where store policy allows (call first), Harvest Hosts memberships, Bureau of Reclamation lake areas (Amistad, Falcon Lake) for primitive RV-accessible sites.

National Forest: Four National Forests in east TX (Sam Houston, Davy Crockett, Angelina, Sabine) plus three National Grasslands (Caddo, Lyndon B Johnson, Black Kettle). All allow dispersed camping along forest roads with a 14-day stay limit. East-Texas piney woods, hot and humid; expect bugs Apr-Oct. Access roads are mostly hard-packed dirt -- passable in dry weather, sticky after rain.

Stay limit: 14 days at any one location (federal rule, applies to BLM and NF dispersed).

Tribal lands

Three federally-recognised tribes in TX: Tigua (Ysleta del Sur Pueblo, El Paso area), Alabama-Coushatta (east TX near Livingston), Kickapoo (south TX near Eagle Pass). Each operates small casinos. Limited RV facilities. Dispersed camping not permitted on tribal land. The Alabama-Coushatta reservation is adjacent to the Big Thicket -- a useful base for a few days.

Propane, dump stations, fuel

Propane: Plentiful in every Texas city of any size and along every interstate. Tractor Supply, U-Haul, and most KOA / Good Sam parks fill on-site. Sparse in the Big Bend region -- fill up in Alpine, Marathon, or Fort Stockton before heading into the park. The RGV snowbird towns (Mission, McAllen, Harlingen, Brownsville) all have plentiful refill options at competitive prices.

Dump stations: Dense in metro areas, along all interstates, and in the snowbird belt. Most state parks have free dump stations for registered guests. Truck stops on I-10, I-20, I-35, I-40, and I-45 have fee dump stations (\$10-15). Free dump stations are common at Texas highway rest areas (uncommon for any state) -- look for the icon on the brown rest-area signs.

Fuel: Diesel and gas widely available along all interstates and US highways. Notable fuel gaps: I-10 west of Fort Stockton (Sanderson is the only refuelling option for 100+ miles southbound), TX-118 + US-385 into Big Bend (fill in Marathon, Alpine, or Fort Stockton -- the Panther Junction gas inside the park is unreliable), the trans-Pecos backroads generally. Fuel prices typically lowest along the Gulf Coast (refinery proximity) and in the Permian Basin; highest in the Hill Country and west TX tourist towns.

Weather windows

Best months: October through May statewide. The RGV snowbird belt holds 70s-80s F daytime through the winter. Hill Country and central TX are most pleasant Mar-May and Oct-Nov. Big Bend is best Oct-Apr; spring wildflowers Mar-Apr are exceptional.

Avoid: June-September almost everywhere -- daytime highs 95-110 F across most of the state, 100-115 F in Big Bend and the Permian. Hurricane season Jun-Nov on the coast (peak Aug-Oct). Tornado season Apr-Jun in the panhandle and north TX -- monitor severe weather alerts daily during a spring trip.

Climate caution

If a named storm enters the western Gulf, you have 48-72 hours to relocate inland or out of the coastal belt entirely. RV parks along the coast may close pre-emptively; mandatory evacuation orders trump everything else. Fuel runs short on evacuation routes within 12 hours of a major storm warning -- top up early.

Emergency + road conditions

State patrol	Dial 9-1-1 for emergencies; (800) 525-5555 for DPS non-emergency
Road conditions	https://drivetexas.org

How RV TripGen helps

Big Bend planned around the heat

RV Tripgen schedules Big Bend overnights for Oct-Apr only and routes you in via Marathon to top up fuel and water before the long stretch into the park.

Hurricane-season alternates for the coast

Every coastal-Texas overnight in your plan Jun-Nov has an inland alternate flagged so an evacuation order doesn't cancel the whole trip.