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Austin, Texas Metro Area

#1 in [Best Places to Live \(/places/rankings/best-places-to-live\)](/places/rankings/best-places-to-live) | Overall Score 7.8 / 10



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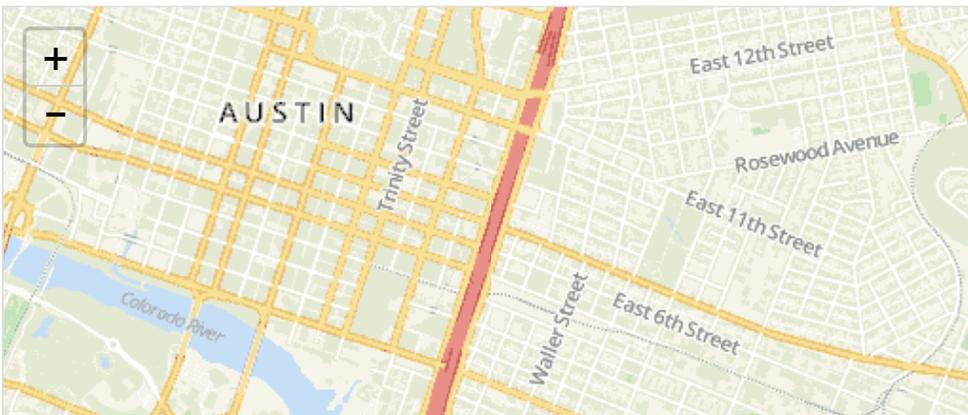
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What's it like to live in Austin, TX?





Profile written by local expert:
Eva Ruth Moravec

About 50 people move to Austin every day, drawn to the Texas capital's music, outdoor spaces and cultural institutions. Austin was established along the Colorado River on the edge of the Hill Country in 1839. Originally named "Waterloo," Austin remains rich in history, from the bronze statue of Stevie Ray Vaughan that greets visitors near the river, to the stately Capitol that anchors downtown, to the LBJ Presidential Library at the University of Texas at Austin.

Named the "Live Music Capital of the World," Austin has a plethora of music venues and local bands to entertain endless crowds. However, musicians should think about finances before moving, as many say it's difficult to make a living in music in Austin. Still, a number of well-established locales are regularly booked and host major musical acts. The metro area is home to banner music festivals like Austin City Limits, a two-weekend-long fall event featuring major headliners and lesser-known acts, as well as South by Southwest, an annual set of film, interactive media and music festivals held in March. Austin's newest music extravaganza, Fun Fun Fun Fest, founded in 2006, has become beloved as a pioneering festival of progressive music and comedy.

Rankings

U.S. News analyzed 100 metro areas in the United States to find the best places to live based on quality of life and the job market in each metro area, as well as the value of living there and people's desire to live there.

Austin, Texas is ranked:

🏆 #1 in [Best Places to Live \(/places/rankings/best-places-to-live\)](/places/rankings/best-places-to-live)

🏆 #9 in [Best Places to Retire \(/places/rankings/best-places-to-retire\)](/places/rankings/best-places-to-retire)

Desirability	8.4
Value	7.3
Job Market	7.5
Quality of Life	7.3
Net Migration	9.8

[Read how we rank places \(/places/methodology\)](/places/methodology)

Austin, TX Quick Stats

 **1,889,094**
METRO POPULATION

 **\$49,560**
AVERAGE ANNUAL SALARY

 **79.7° / 54.8°**
AVG HIGH/LOW TEMPS

 **33.6**
MEDIAN AGE

 **\$262,449**
MEDIAN HOME PRICE

 **32.2 inches**
AVG ANNUAL RAINFALL

 **3.2%**
UNEMPLOYMENT RATE

 **\$1,044**
AVG MONTHLY RENT

 **26.2 minutes**
AVG COMMUTE TIME

What's the cost of living in Austin, TX?

Austin is one of the fastest-growing metro areas in the country. That may be great news for the local economy, but a tough pill to swallow for people shopping for a home. The median sales price for a single-family home in Austin is well above the national average. However, Austinites' pocketbooks benefit from no personal or corporate income tax, and a low state and local tax rate.

Value Index

Index Score: 7.3 /10

[How we calculate this.](#)(/places/methodology).

 *Austin offers a better value than similarly sized metro areas when you compare housing costs to median household income.*

Housing Costs this Year



Austin
\$262,449

USA
\$211,704

Housing Costs Over Time

Data sourced from Zillow median home sale price data series. Additional data provided by the Austin Board of Realtors, Houston Association of Realtors, Intermountain MLS, Omaha Area Board of Realtors, San Antonio Board of Realtors, and the Salt Lake Board of Realtors.

What's the weather like in Austin, TX?

Summers in Austin take some getting used to, with temperatures often reaching the mid-90s. The metro area experiences mild weather throughout the rest of the year, though temperatures have been known to drop into the 30s in the winter.

Seasonal Temperature (Avg)

 **50.6°F**
Winter

 **67.2°F**
Spring

 **82.7°F**
Summer

 **68.4°F**
Fall

Seasonal Rainfall (Avg)

 **2.4 in**
Winter

 **2.7 in**
Spring

 **4.4 in**
Summer

 **4.0 in**
Fall

Monthly High and Low Temperatures (°F)

Data sourced from the National Climatic Data Center.

What's the best way to get around Austin, TX?

Austin is among the nation's worst metro areas for traffic congestion. Austin's traffic problem can be addressed with flexible work schedules, due diligence when choosing a neighborhood and, for those wanting to get in some exercise while commuting, using public transportation, walking and biking.

The metro area's public transit system, Capital Metro, operates 50 bus routes and a 32-mile rail line. Texans love to drive though, and for those craving the wind-in-the-hair feeling, State Highway 130 offers miles of tolled lanes with the highest speed limit in the western hemisphere: 85 miles per hour.

Austin-Bergstrom International Airport is just a few miles from downtown and has about 300 daily flights. Amtrak trains and intercity buses also service the metro area.

Commuting in Austin, TX

Means of Transportation

 **Driving**

87%

Equal to national average

 **Bicycling**

1%

Equal to national average

 **Walking**

2%

Equal to national average

 **Public Transit**

2%

Below national average

Average Commute Time



26.2 minutes

 **0.3 minutes more than** national average

Average Commute Times by Zip Code

Data sourced from the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey.

Who lives in Austin, TX?

While Austin attracts a wide range of people, from students and single professionals to families and retirees, it is not necessarily geographically diverse. Historically, Austin's east side has been the home of a high concentration of African-Americans; however, recent gentrification has changed the neighborhood dramatically, forcing African-Americans to migrate to the suburbs. Hispanics have clustered in neighborhoods on the south and east sides. West Austin – with its scenic views of the downtown skyline and rolling hills – has become the center of Austin affluence. Students at the University of Texas fill housing in central Austin, while young professionals, wealthy retirees, lawyers and lobbyists inhabit the thousands of condos and apartments downtown.

Austinites with kids tend to live outside of the urban core. Despite the traffic, parents regularly take advantage of the metro area's wide range of kid-friendly events and activities, from free museum days to outdoor festivals to natural attractions, like watching the world's largest bat colony emerge from a bridge downtown at dusk.

While Austin is typically shown as a splotch of blue in Texas' sea of red during elections, there's an influx of conservatives who move to town during the legislative session, which goes on for six months every other year.

Age Distribution

Marital Status Breakdown

About the same number of single people in Austin as national average

Data sourced from the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey.

What is there to do in Austin, TX?

Residents like to escape the urban bustle with a hike, bicycle ride, jog, kayak or canoe ride in one of more than 250 parks. Austinites also love to watch sports, and enjoy wearing burnt orange to cheer on the University of Texas Longhorns, tailgating at football games and packing the school's basketball arena. Austin also hosts the X Games and Formula One races at the Circuit of The Americas.

Known as the Live Music Capital of the World, Austin houses many establishments where residents can enjoy good tunes. Those who are looking for a great dining experience will enjoy Austin's bustling culinary scene, featuring an endless array of food trucks and high-quality, esteemed restaurants.

[Find out more about what there is to see and do in Austin, TX](http://travel.usnews.com/Austin_TX/Things_To_Do/)
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- #2 [Denver, CO](/places/colorado/denver)
- #3 [San Jose, CA](/places/california/san-jose)
- #4 [Washington, DC](/places/district-of-columbia/washington)
- #5 [Fayetteville, AR](/places/arkansas/fayetteville)



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Best Places to Live

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- 👉 #3 [San Jose, CA](/places/california/san-jose)
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