

"Come back to the Gage"

14 Days
AT THE
Gage



G A G E
HOTEL

101 HIGHWAY 90 WEST ★ MARATHON, TEXAS 79842
432.386.4205 ★ FAX 432.386.4510
1.800.884.GAGE
WWW.GAGEHOTEL.COM

G A G E
HOTEL

The Gage Hotel

14 Days at the Gage

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DAY ONE

BIG BEND NATIONAL PARK—EAST SIDE

www.nps.gov/bibe • 432.477.2251 • ALL DAY TRIP

Schedule: Leave the Gage Hotel at 9 a.m. Take 385 South. The entrance to Big Bend National Park is 40 miles from Marathon. Pay and continue 20 miles to the Fossil Bone Exhibit. Pause at Panther Junction Visitor Center to view the relief map of the park, then visit the bookstore and check out the Nature Trail where you can learn the names of the native plants that will be your constant companions throughout your visit.

Next, drive southeast 17 miles and turn off at the Hot Springs sign. The spring was first used by Native Americans. After parking, follow the signs along the river bank. Take bathing suits if you are inclined to take a dip. After resting in the Hot Springs, continue 2 miles to the campsite at Rio Grande Village and hike the Nature Trail out over the water or 4 miles to Boquillas Canyon (easy hike from the parking lot to the canyon).

Return to the Gage Hotel for a delicious dinner at 12 Gage Restaurant and drinks at the famous White Buffalo Bar.

Total miles: 192

DAY TWO

BIG BEND NATIONAL PARK—MIDDLE PARK

www.nps.gov/bibe • 432.477.2251 • ALL DAY TRIP

Schedule: Leave the Gage Hotel at 9 a.m. Take 385 South to Big Bend National Park Basin, which is approximately 76 miles south of Marathon. As you enter the Basin, you will marvel at the dramatic changes in geology. It is literally an ecological island, a remnant of a period 10,000 years ago when the entire region was the beneficiary of much more rainfall. Stop at the Lost Mine Trail Head. Although the trail is a five-mile hike round trip, a walk of approximately one mile will take you to a view of the South Rim. Along the way, there are many trees with their species identified by signs. The view of the South Rim is one of the best views in Texas. After you have gone far enough, you can turn around knowing the way back is downhill! Continue on to the Basin and the Chisos Mountain Lodge, where you'll find a restaurant, gift shop, post office, store, and ranger station.

If you are energetic enough you may also hike the Window Trail, (or save this hike for another day) which is another 5 mile hike, the first half downhill and the second half uphill. Much easier is

the quarter-mile Window View Trail, looking down directly into the Window. An interesting feature in the basin is the older rock cabins, which were part of a WPA (Works Project Administration) project. An overnight stay at the Chisos Mountain Lodge is recommended, but you must book your reservations well in advance. **Total Miles: 152**

Chisos Mountain Lodge 432.477.2291
www.chisosmountainlodge.com

DAY THREE

BIG BEND NATIONAL PARK—WEST SIDE— MAXWELL SCENIC DRIVE, CASTOLON, SANTA ELENA CANYON

www.nps.gov/bibe • 432.477.2251 • ALL DAY TRIP

Schedule: Leave the Gage Hotel at 9 a.m. Take 385 South to Big Bend National Park (79 miles). Pay fee at the park entrance. Continue 26 miles to Panther Junction Visitor Center. Check the relief map of the park, see the expanded book store and take the self-guided nature trail.

Continue west approximately 10 miles to Maxwell Scenic Drive turn off, then follow the Drive stopping as desired, (try Sotol Vista Overlook, in particular) to Castolon (22 miles). This trip along the western flank of the Chisos Mountains gives you mountain views and desert landscapes, then takes you down to the Rio Grande. Visit the Old Trading Post at Castolon and then continue on to Santa Elena Canyon (8 miles) for an easy hike to the canyon mouth and a picnic lunch under the cottonwood trees. Take the Old Maverick Road (a gravel road—check with park personnel regarding its condition) to the west entrance (13 miles). Return through the park to Marathon (91 miles) or north on Hwy 118 via Alpine to Marathon (113 miles). The Gage will be happy to provide a picnic lunch.

Total Miles: 209 (or 231)



You may take any one of these trips to Fort Davis separately or combine them for a full action-packed day!

DAY FOUR MCDONALD OBSERVATORY

www.mcdonaldobservatory.org • 432.426.3640
Ft. Davis, Texas • HALF DAY TRIP

Schedule: Leave the Gage Hotel at 9 a.m. McDonald Observatory is located 71 miles northwest of the Gage Hotel. Travel west on Hwy 90 into Alpine. Once in Alpine take Hwy 118 north (16 miles) through Ft. Davis to the Observatory, the home of the Hobby-Eberly Telescope (the world's third-largest optical telescope). Plan to arrive at the Visitors Center well before 11 a.m. for the 50-minute presentation on Solar Activity in the multi-media theater. Then continue to the Observatory for a guided tour; guides will explain the history, operations and research purposes of the telescopes.

Cost is \$9.00 per person. Star Parties are offered in the evenings, Tuesday, Friday and Saturday at sunset. Check the web page or call 877.984.7827 for seasonal times. Cost is \$14.00 per person. Lunch is available at the on-site StarDate Café.

Return to Ft. Davis with a possible detour to Davis Mountains State Park to visit the Skyline Drive or Indian Lodge (a WPA project) for lunch. Or, on your way back, make time to stop at the Prude Ranch (located 6 miles west of Fort Davis on Hwy 118) for a self-guided tour of their facilities. This is one of the best summer camps in Texas.

432.426.3202 • www.prude-ranch.com

Total miles: 144



DAVIS MOUNTAINS SCENIC LOOP

www.fortdavis.com • 800.524.3015 • Ft. Davis, Texas
HALF DAY TRIP

Schedule: Leave the Gage Hotel at 8 a.m. Get as much of the drive as possible with the sun to your back. Take Hwy 90 west to Alpine (31 miles), then Hwy 118 north to Fort Davis (24 miles). Stop in Fort Davis Drugstore for an early morning refreshment. The Scenic Loop drive leaves Fort Davis on Texas 118, proceeds up Limpia Canyon past Mt. Locke and Mt. Fowlkes and then into Madera Canyon and a quiet shaded picnic area, with an optional hiking trail. After a left on Texas 166, the road passes Mt. Livermore and Sawtooth Mountain, then gradually descends toward the southeast side of the range, with broad views toward the Sierra Viejo Mountains to the south. Hwy 166 joins US 17 near a tomato farm, then return to Fort Davis, after 75 miles, with the highest elevation reached—6,700 ft. To return to the Gage continue on 118 East to Alpine, then take US 90 East to Marathon!

Total miles: 187

FORT DAVIS NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE

www.nps.gov/foda/ • 432.426.3224 • Ft. Davis, Texas
HALF DAY TRIP

Schedule: It is a 56-mile one way trip via Alpine to the restored Fort. Take the time to see all the restored structures in the Fort, also the small museum. Begin with a viewing of a 15-minute video about the establishment of the Fort. It was home for the famous Buffalo Soldiers; African Americans who won three Medals of Honor for service against the Native Americans.

Fort Davis is one of the finest examples of a military restoration in the United States. Special attention should be drawn to the officers' headquarters—both their proportional and functional design. Plan to arrive in time to hear the Dress Parade Retreat bugle calls from loudspeakers that take place at 11 a.m., 2 p.m. and 4 p.m. Don't forget to visit the post hospital.

Time and weather permitting, take one of the short trails which climb to the cliff tops behind the fort. Enjoy a great panorama, and imagine what a soldier's life was like in those bygone days.

The Fort is open daily (except for 4 national holidays) 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. for self guided tours. The cost is \$3.00 per person.

Total miles: 112

DAY FIVE
BALMORHEA SWIMMING POOL

www.cityofbalmorhea.com

The pool is open year round from 8 a.m. to sunset. The cost is \$7.00 per person, children under 12 are free.

24 million gallons of fresh spring water is fed daily into the pool with a year round temperature of 74 degrees. No Lifeguard, so swim at your own risk.

BALMORHEA STATE PARK

www.tpwd.state.tx.us • 432.375.2370 • **ALL DAY TRIP**

Schedule: Travel on Hwy 90 west to Alpine. Once in Alpine take Hwy 118 North to Fort Davis where you will then take Hwy 17 North to Balmorhea (32 miles). Your arrival at Balmorhea State Park will reveal one of the finest fresh-water swimming holes in America. Huck Finn would have given it a 10 plus. It has been the subject of numerous articles and is a favorite spot for scuba divers. In addition, visit the Desert Wetlands or Cienega, a recent installation where you can observe underwater fish activity. The entrance fee is \$7.00 per person for anyone 13 years and older. No lifeguard. Swim at your own risk. Be sure to take your swimming suit, towels and a picnic lunch. The Gage Hotel will be happy to provide towels and a box lunch. **Total miles: 176**



DAY SIX
CHIHUAHUAN DESERT NATURE CENTER & BOTANICAL GARDENS

www.cdri.org • 432.364.2499

Schedule: Four miles south of Fort Davis just off Hwy 118 is this sometimes-overlooked gem of a place. Good for learning, good for fun. Good for adults and for kids. Open Monday thru Saturday year round, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Entrance fee is \$6.00.

Within the 507-acre property, adjacent to the Visitor Center, are The Botanical Gardens, which display 160 species of plants native to the Chihuahuan Desert. The Succulent House houses over 200 species of cacti and succulents.

The Modesto Canyon Trail is a 1.5 hour route into a hidden canyon with year-round water. Exiting the canyon, visitors can climb up to Calyton's Overlook for a superb panorama of the surrounding terrain and a new geology exhibit which explains it. Be sure to check out the mining exhibit before leaving the Center.

Total miles: 104

DAY SEVEN
BIG BEND RANCH STATE PARK

www.tpwd.state.tx.us • 432.424.3327

Eastern Side • Barton Warnock Environmental Center
ALL DAY TRIP

Located west of Lajitas and east of Fort Leaton. A wonderful recently-acquired resource that covers 302,000 acres of some of the region's most remarkable geological sites and desert landscapes. Big Bend Ranch State Park offers primitive hiking, backpacking, nature study, river rafting and canoeing.

Schedule: Leave the Gage Hotel at 8 a.m. Take Hwy 90 west to Alpine. Once in Alpine, take Hwy 118 South to Terlingua/Study Butte (78 miles). From there take Hwy 170 West (16 miles) to the Barton Warnock Environmental Center. Open 8:00 a.m. to 4.30 p.m. daily, set in a 2.5 acre desert garden, the center contains a state-of-the-art visual display of the geology, history, and natural/cultural assets of the entire region. Ask about new trails starting close to the center. Or travel 7 miles on the River Road (Hwy 170) to an abandoned movie set, or a little further to the Fresno Ranch trailhead. Barton Warnock Environmental Center: 432-424-3327. **Total miles: 272**

DAY EIGHT

BIG BEND RANCH STATE PARK—WESTERN SIDE

www.tpwd.state.tx.us • 432.229.3613

Western Side • Fort Leaton State Historical Park

ALL DAY TRIP

Schedule: Leave the Gage Hotel at 8 a.m. Travel east to Alpine on US 90, then continue to Marfa. Turn left on to Hwy 67 to Presidio (129 miles so far). Fort Leaton is three miles southeast of Presidio on Hwy 170.

Formerly the trading post and home of trader Ben Leaton, this massive adobe fortress is now a museum with interpretive exhibits, a bookstore and picnic garden. Wander through the high-ceilinged empty halls, and look at the mighty Chihuahua Trail wagon in the rear.

The fort also is the office for the Big Bend Ranch State Park. Passes are issued here, and maps handed out. It is 34 miles to Saucedo Ranch headquarters in the center of the park—perhaps a visit for another day. Recently the park has undergone extensive opening of new routes and campsites, and access to the Solitario.

Total miles: 279



DAY NINE

GOLF (TWO COURSES)

Alpine • www.alpinetexas.com • 432.837.2752 • ALL DAY

In a beautiful setting below Sul Ross campus and next to Kokernot Park. The Alpine Golf Course is nine holes, and obviously you tee off at different tee boxes in order to play the full eighteen. Cost per 9-hole round is \$20.00 for weekdays and \$25.00 on weekends. Cart fee is \$15.00 per person per 9 holes. The Gage Hotel will be more than happy to make reservations.

Hours: 8 a.m. till dark Tuesday through Sunday.

Marfa • www.marfacc.com • 432.729.4043 • ALL DAY

Another area golf course is located in Marfa, 60 miles from the Gage Hotel and 30 miles west of Alpine on Hwy 90. This is also a nine-hole course, and the cost is \$16.00 Tuesday through Thursday and \$21.25 Friday through Sunday, plus the cart rental of \$9.50.

It is recommended that you play the Alpine course first, and then drive to Marfa for lunch at The Food Shark or Squeeze Marfa. Marfa is home of the highest elevation golf course (4,882 ft.) in the state of Texas.

Hours: 8:30 a.m. till dark Tuesday through Sunday

Total miles: 93



DAY TEN
RIVER ROAD DRIVE

Lajitas to Presidio • www.lajitas.org
www.historic-terlingua.com • ALL DAY TRIP

Cited by National Geographic as one of the most scenic routes in North America, the 50-mile narrow and winding paved road is a thriller. It follows an international border, squeezed between the mountains of the Big Bend Ranch State Park and the Rio Grande. It offers distant vistas and surprising close-ups; it shares history, geology natural wonders with those who travel its length. Follow Route 1 (morning journey) or Route 2 (late afternoon—will put the sun behind you).

Schedule: Leave the Gage Hotel at 8 a.m. to Alpine and south to Study Butte, then Terlingua (112 miles). Try Kathy's Kosmic Kowgirl Kafé west of Study Butte for coffee and the chance to meet some locals. Don't forget Terlingua Ghost Town, remains of a once vibrant mining community, which stands as a shadowy remnant of an incredible period of border commerce. Mercury was mined here for more than 40 years.

On to Big Bend Ranch State Park for a visit to the Barton Warnock Environmental Center which has an excellent exhibit of desert plants and animal life to behold.

At Lajitas you start (on FM 170) the River Road. At the other end visit the restored Fort Leaton in Redford. In between you can see a movie set, hoodoos (geologists' term for oddly eroded rocks), Closed Canyon (for a hike) and inspiring vistas at every turn—sometimes only paces from the Rio Grande. The entire trip along the river road will take approximately two hours; ending in the town of Presidio, Texas. Try lunch at El Patio or La Escondida Bar & Grill, just outside of town. Return to the Gage Hotel along Hwy 67 West to Marfa—then, Hwy 90 east to Marathon. **Total miles: 302**



RIVER ROAD DRIVE # 2

Presidio to Lajitas • www.lajitas.com
www.historic-terlingua.com • ALL DAY TRIP

Schedule: Leave the Gage Hotel either early or late afternoon depending on the time of year. Take Hwy 90 west to Marfa and then Hwy 67 to Presidio (117 miles). Expect to arrive at Presidio at an hour sufficient to leave two hours of sunlight to enjoy the river road. This two-hour drive will give you many spectacular views of the Rio Grande and the surrounding landscape. If you would like to visit the former mining town of Shafter, which you will pass on the road to Presidio and which has a little museum, you should leave earlier in the day. Visit Fort Leaton before starting the River Road. Along the way, you will pass strange rocks formations, almost touch the river bank of the Rio Grande, enjoy distant vistas from the top of Big Hill and experience ever-changing dramatic sights: history, geology and other natural wonders. Schedule your arrival into Lajitas in time for dinner at the Ocotillo (432.424.5030) or The Starlight Theater (432.371.2326) in Terlingua for an interesting experience not found in urban surroundings. Continue on to the Gage Hotel by taking Hwy 170 east to Hwy 118 north through Alpine where you will take Hwy 90 east and head on back to the Gage Hotel. **Total miles: 302**



**DAY ELEVEN
ALPINE**

www.alpinetexas.com • 800.561.3735 • **ALL DAY TRIP**

Schedule: Leave the Gage Hotel at 10 a.m. Arrive in Alpine at approximately 10:30 a.m. Leave one hour for viewing the must-see Museum of the Big Bend at Sul Ross University open Tuesday through Saturday 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. and Sunday 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. (432.837.8143). The museum presents both permanent and temporary exhibits that capture and contrast the history of the Big Bend region. The exhibits encompass the contributions of Native Americans, Spaniards, Mexicans, and Anglo Americans; a special map exhibit is housed downstairs. The Chihuahan Desert Cactus Garden is a short walk across campus outside Lawrence Hall.

While in Alpine you may also like to take a walking tour of Historic Downtown and visit some of the unique shops, galleries and restaurants. Alpine also hosts the famed Cowboy Poetry Gathering towards the end of February every year.

Enjoy breakfast or lunch at a variety of local eateries. Visit www.alpinetexas.com for a current listing.

Selected shops and galleries are all within walking distance downtown.

FRONT STREET BOOKS Two adjacent premises with loads of books, new and used, specializing in local culture and history.

IVEY'S EMPORIUM Packed with merchandise from Native American jewelry to Hispanic Art and Devotion. Art, cards, foodstuff, candles and more.

KIOWA GALLERY More local artists display here than you can imagine. All mediums, with a wide price range. Strong on jewelry.

CATCHLIGHT GALLERY Twelve local artists display their work in this attractive space next to Bread & Breakfast coffee shop.

Total miles: 61



**DAY TWELVE
MARFA**

www.marface.com • www.chinati.org • 432.729.4362
ALL DAY TRIP

Schedule: Leave the Gage Hotel at 10 a.m. Expect to arrive in Marfa (57 miles) at approximately 11:15 a.m. for a self-guided tour of the Presidio County Courthouse, one of the best courthouse restorations in the state of Texas. Climb almost 200 steps to the cupola which will give you a memorable view of the desert and mountains. The courtroom cannot be described as anything but outstanding. The next stop is the Presidio County Museum at 110 W. San Antonio St., open Thursday thru Saturday, 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. A must-see is the Historic Paisano Hotel, where the cast from the movie “Giant” stayed during filming in 1955. There is an impressive bookstore on Highland Avenue, the Marfa Book Company, next to an arts and crafts shop, as well as many galleries and eateries—all signs of new Marfa. For a unique art experience, a visit to the famous Chinati Foundation, (established by Donald Judd in 1979) is worth the trip. The Chinati foundation is open Wednesday thru Sunday and tours start at 10 a.m.

If you wish to hold over until dark, you may see the Marfa Lights—a phenomenon that remains a mystery. We suggest a later departure in the afternoon for this trip, as the Lights are seen after sunset. A trip to Marfa to view the Marfa Lights should be a part of your plans while staying in the Big Bend Region. The viewing place is 8 miles west of Marfa on Hwy 90. You might pause in Alpine on your way to Marfa to view a short video about the Marfa Lights that can be seen any time at the Apache Trading Post on US 90 just west of Alpine. The video shows examples of the lights and explains some of the theories for their existence.

Total miles: 114



DAY THIRTEEN
CHINATI HOT SPRINGS VIA PINTO CANYON

432.229.4165 • ALL DAY OR OVERNIGHT TRIP

Schedule: This schedule will take you on a driving adventure to Marfa and then onto FM 2810. When the paved road ends, you continue on a steep, gravel road through Pinto Canyon, which is truly a spectacular venue. A high clearance vehicle is recommended. Your destination is the remote Chinati Hot Springs, overlooking the Rio Grande Valley and the mountains of Mexico. It is 55 miles from Marfa, so allow two hours travel time. Known for centuries to Native Americans who relished the unlimited 109°F water natural spring water, today the Hot Springs provide cabins, hot tubs and a cool pool—but no food is served. You will want to take bathing suits and some type of water shoes. We suggest, on your return that you take paved roads to Presidio for a meal, on to Marfa (102 miles) then east to Marathon.

Total miles: 271



DAY FOURTEEN
DAY IN MARATHON

www.marathontexas.net • 432.386.4249

Spend a day at The Gage Hotel—enjoy a leisurely breakfast at the Marathon Coffee Shop, then relax for awhile with a book by the pool. After lunch, go across the street to Gage Fitness in The Ritchie Building for a mid-afternoon workout. Enjoy Spa at the Gage for a luxurious facial, relaxing massage, or choose from a variety of body wraps. Follow your massage with a walk across the railroad tracks, turn left and pass from a dusty street to a serene space of organic life and energy. The Gage Gardens, a 26-acre site dedicated to growing produce for the 12 Gage Restaurant, provides space for guest activities (dancing, weddings, receptions or simple reflection). Native plants thrive next to well-tended lawns; fruit trees flourish and soon a vineyard will be harvested. A quarter-mile track (surfaced with recycled glass) winds past a lovely pond, beautiful fountains and a putting green. Mature shade trees provide relief from the desert sun and occasional seating offers a chance to stop and observe nature close-up, including migrating birds attracted to the water. In winter, a fire pit with banquette seating allows guests to cozy up to a nighttime fire with a glass of wine.

After that, get ready for a fabulous meal at 12 Gage Restaurant and then relax in our world famous White Buffalo Bar.



There are many interesting sites, people, shops and countryside in Marathon. We recommend either a run, walk or bike ride down the Post Road to the county park, the Post Park. Also, located on the northeast side of town is Iron Mountain Road, perfect for an evening walk as the sun is setting. The road is 1.5 miles to the gate to Iron Mountain Ranch.

Main Street is a mixture of shops and artisans. Make sure to save time to visit each of them.

MARATHON DINING GUIDE

12 Gage Restaurant and the White Buffalo Bar

Johnny B's

The Marathon Coffee Shop

French Company Grocer

WHEN THE SUN GOES DOWN

WHITE BUFFALO BAR—at the Gage Hotel featuring the finest margaritas and the friendliest bartenders in the world. The White Buffalo Bar occasionally features live music. Sit outside in the courtyard and enjoy the star filled night sky! **432.386.4205**

THEATRE OF THE BIG BEND—features musical productions, classic theatre and other performances throughout the year. Be sure to take your lawn chairs. For show titles and dates, call the Theatre in Alpine at **432.837-8218**.

RAILROAD BLUES CLUB—located in Alpine, offers live music every night, dancing and billiards.
432.837.3103 • www.railroadblues.com

MARFA LIGHTS—the best viewing is about 10 miles east of Marfa on Hwy 90 to Alpine. It is a well-marked turn out on the south side of the road. Viewing occurs after sunset.

MCDONALD OBSERVATORY STAR PARTIES—Tickets can be purchased any time of day or evening of a scheduled Star Party. Guests can view heavenly bodies through a number of telescopes.
432.426.3640 • www.mcdonaldobservatory.com

STARLIGHT THEATRE—set in the historic ghost mining town in Terlingua. Starlight is open 7 days a week from 5 p.m., except during the summer months when it is open Thursday through Monday. The menu is varied and features steaks with a southwestern flair. Their specialty is tortilla soup served each Monday. The restaurant regularly features live music Thursdays through Sundays. Reservations are only recommended for large groups.
432.371-2326

