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This State Is One of the Best in the U.S. for a Spring Road Trip — With 800,000 Miles of Wildflower-lined Highways

Welcome to Central Texas in the springtime — you'll come for the bluebonnets, but stay for the wine and barbecue.

By [Mariah Tyler](#) | Updated on March 1, 2024

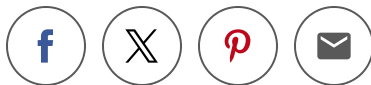


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As my plane landed at Austin-Bergstrom International Airport, the view from my window was a luscious and vibrant field of bluebonnets. This specifically Texas welcome couldn't have been more perfect — and it's one of my favorite homecoming sights as a native Texan. Whether you're landing at the airport

It's cause to celebrate as visitors and locals make their way to the fields of bluebonnets for seasonal photoshoots, picnics, or hikes with loved ones. As with many things, Texans take great pride in their state flower, and this time of year, that pride is on full display — of course, so are the flowers. The lupine flower is a symbol of joy, and when the flowers make their appearance from mid- to late March through April (or later, in northern parts of Texas), there's no better time to be in the Lone Star State.

Flowers to Look for in Texas



PHOTO: COURTESY OF THE LADY BIRD JOHNSON WILDFLOWER CENTER

Bluebonnets, a common name for a few species of lupines, grow all over Texas. While Central Texas is home to an especially colorful array of wildflowers, the bluebonnet is the official state flower and the showstopper of spring throughout.



[The Texas Department of Transportation](#) is a longtime advocate for the proliferation and protection of the state's wildflowers. Since the mid-1930s, there has been a push to preserve the wildflowers not only for their beauty, but for their role in preventing soil erosion. To this day, the department implements a no-mow policy until after the spring bloom. It buys and sows more than 30,000 pounds of flower seeds along more than 800,000 miles of highways. It is this practice that makes Texas's state highways and farm-to-market roads the best viewing areas for wildflowers.

While there are many great [road trip routes to see Texas wildflowers](#), the area to focus on is Texas Hill Country. Central Texas, around Austin and San Antonio, is the best place for bluebonnets, wine, and barbecue — and the area is easily accessible from two major airports.

Where to See Wildflowers



PHOTO: COURTESY OF THE LADY BIRD JOHNSON WILDFLOWER CENTER

Lady Bird Johnson is credited with much of the state's conservation and mid-century beautification efforts around the country. In Texas, she helped save Enchanted Rock, a state natural area, from becoming a granite quarry, and on her 70th birthday, she opened what is now known as the [Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center](#) in Austin. This legacy alone makes the wildflower center an absolute must. Learn about all things Texas wildflowers and nature from the center's experts on a guided audio tour and take in the natural beauty of native plants and flowers. The center also has maps of drives in Texas with the best views of wildflowers.

Another top stop is [Wildseed Farms](#), the nation's largest working flower farm, a short drive from the main street area in Fredericksburg. This sprawling 200-acre farm has trails and gardens to explore with opportunities for learning about the state's native plants and wildflowers. Visitors can shop for seeds, plants, and farm goods, and visit the wine tasting room where they serve vino made from grapes grown on-site.

RELATED: [How to Responsibly See the Wildflowers Bloom This Spring, According to Experts](#)



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[Camp Lucy](#) in Dripping Springs is best for those looking for upscale resort accommodations. It offers several on-site experiences like hiking, archery, yoga, and alpaca feeding. Farther west along U.S. highway 290 is the retro-feeling [Stonewall Motor Lodge](#). Originally built in the 1960s, it housed Lyndon B. Johnson's press pool when he came to town. It's a perfect place to stay on a wildflower road trip.

[Hill Country Herb Garden](#) in Fredericksburg has a selection of tiny cottages for a cozy night in town. The spa is surprisingly intimate and luxurious, and the restaurant has some of the best brunch in Texas Hill Country. For the adventurous, [Missing Hotel](#) near Marble Falls (in the northern side of Hill Country) offers contemporary glamping among the secluded wilderness. And if you're near Marble Falls, be sure to stop by the famed [Blue Bonnet Cafe](#) to top off your Central Texas bluebonnet trip with all-day breakfast or a slice of pie.

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