

# Hiking West Texas Mountains and Canyons

**April 18, 2020 to April 26, 2020**

**Sat. 04/18** You will fly into El Paso, where I will meet you at Baggage Claims, We will pick up 4 Dodge Caravans, 5 to each vehicle, with plenty of room for luggage. We'll drive to the Home2 Suites by Hilton near the airport and check in. El Paso, unlike most of Texas, is on Mountain time.

We will then drive to the El Paso Artists and Farmers Market for lunch and a quick visit. Local arts and crafts are available, along with any fresh foods you may want during our trip. Some of you may want to stay downtown and visit the Museum of Art, which has a very good and interesting collection. Others may want to venture to Franklin Mountain for a good hike (Tin Mines trail is 2- 2-1/2 hours). Dinner afterwards on your own – suggestions are L & J Café for local cuisine \$\$-\$\$\$\$, Taft Diaz for American and seafood \$\$\$\$, Mesa Street Grill for steaks \$\$\$\$. Lots of other choices too. Then off to San Jacinto Plaza in the middle of downtown El Paso for some music and nightlife!

**Sun. 04/19** Breakfast included at hotel; bag lunch can be provided by hotel. Then we are off to Hueco Tanks State Historic Site for hiking, bouldering, viewing 800 years old pictographs. Reservation will be made with guide to take us to restricted areas for best viewing of pictographs, some 4' tall! This is a medium to hard hike, so some may prefer hiking in Franklin Mountains or drive to White Sands National Monument (60 miles from El Paso) and Las Cruces in New Mexico.

Back to hotel for a wine and cheese party, including the famous prickly pear margaritas. Then dinner on your own (list of other restaurants will be provided later).

**Mon. 04/20** Breakfast included at hotel and checkout. Again, bag lunch is needed. We then drive about 100 miles to the Guadalupe Mountains for hiking. This is the highest point in Texas – 8,749 feet. Several trails to hike – Smith Spring Trail is an easy 2.3 mile loop with several small waterfall views, Devil's Hall Trail is a 4.2 mile round trip hike through a canyon to the Devil's Hall, and McKittrick Canyon Trail is a 6.8 mile round trip to a lovely grotto.

The drive to Carlsbad, New Mexico is about 40 miles, and our Days Inn by Wyndam is where we will stay for 3 days. Dinner in Carlsbad is on your own. Fine dining at Trinity Restaurant & Wine Bar, Yellow Brix Restaurant \$\$ for eclectic American fare, No Whiner Diner \$\$, Lucy's Mexicali Restaurant \$\$, Danny's Place \$\$\$ for barbeque.

**Tues 04/21** Breakfast included at hotel. Bag lunch is needed, as we will drive back to Guadalupe Mountains for a full day of hiking. Numerous trails to take – high country views require hiking up the Bowl, Bush Mountain, or Blue Ridge trails, from 10 to 17 miles. Tejas Trail is 10.5 miles, including Hunter Peak and into the steep Bear Canyon Trail. The 17-mile loop on Tejas is to Bush Mtn and Blue Ridge. And, Guadalupe Peak Trail is an 8.4 miles strenuous round trip, but an awesome view at the peak from mountains in Ruidoso NM to Ft Davis TX.

Back to Carlsbad for dinner at a restaurant of your choice.

**Wed. 04/22** Breakfast included at hotel. If you go back to Guadalupe Mountains to hike, you need to get a bag lunch. If you go to Carlsbad Caverns National Park, there is a cafeteria there for lunch. Reservations for a guide through some areas of the caverns will be arranged. You can also drive to White Sands National Monument or Roswell.

Back to Carlsbad for dinner at a restaurant of your choice.

**Thur 04/23** Breakfast included at hotel, then checkout for drive to Amarillo, TX, which is 300 miles away. We'll either go through Roswell NM or Lubbock TX, stopping for lunch. In Amarillo we stay at the Hampton Inn and Suites West. After checking in we can wander around the downtown area, part of US Route 66. The Sixth Street Historic District is a hub for dining and antiques. You can dine at the Big Texan Steak Ranch, which has a legendary 72-ounce steak challenge! Otherwise, there is TexMex, barbeque, Latin American, American, Italian and burger eateries.

**Fri. 04/24** Breakfast is included at hotel. We'll take a short drive to Palo Duro Canyon, spend the day hiking and horseback riding for some. The Rock Garden Trail is 5 miles round trip and the most difficult; the 6 mile Lighthouse Trail is easier and takes you to the Lighthouse rock formation. There is a small restaurant at the bottom of the canyon for lunch, or we can drive to the town of Canyon where there are lots of restaurant choices. The town also has the largest history museum in the state, boasting millions of artifacts and artworks, dinosaurs to oil derricks. We will stop in Canyon for dinner too, before we head back to Amarillo.

**Sat. 04/25** Breakfast is included at hotel. We'll go back to Palo Duro Canyon, hike and horseback ride again and probably back to Canyon for a pizza lunch at Barrel & Pie. We will head back to Amarillo for our last dinner.

**Sun. 04/26** Breakfast is included at hotel. Time to pack, check out, take a last stroll through town and head to airport for vehicle returns and departures.