



This blog post was first published in Livestrong Magazine and has since been published in several other locations. Its focus was to raise awareness of the varied beach experiences available within the state of Texas.

5 NATURAL BEACHES TO SEE IN TEXAS

From pristine natural landscapes to bustling ocean-side towns, the beaches along the Texas coast can provide any beach-goer with something to enjoy. According to Eyes on Texas, there are 624 miles of shoreline from the Texas/Louisiana border at Sabine Pass to the Texas/Mexico border at Boca Chica. Home of the original spring break and able to provide nature in its rawest features, Texas offers at least five major yet distinct beach options.

Sea Rim State Park

Not always considered a major destination point, Sea Rim State Park is the northernmost beach destination in Texas with a particular attraction to bird watchers. The park is located almost directly across the Gulf of Mexico from the Yucatan Peninsula, placing it directly in the migratory route for many bird species. Predominantly marshy, there is also a stretch of sandy beach available for swimming, fishing, shelling, building sandcastles and camping among other activities. The park is still recovering from damage sustained during Hurricane Ike in 2008, but it is open to visitors.

Sea Rim State Park
PO Box 356
20 miles south of Port Arthur on Hwy. 87
Sabine Pass, TX 77655
409-971-2559
tpwd.state.tx.us/spdest/findadest/parks/sea_rim/#sch

Galveston Island

Galveston Island also suffered a great deal of damage during Hurricane Ike, but the beaches are open for visitors. According to the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department website, day use areas are fully equipped with tables, grills, restrooms and rinse-off showers while restrooms without showers are available on the bay side of the island. In his book Texas Coast, Joe Nick Patoski describes Galveston as the New Orleans of Texas. Rich with history and only 50 miles from the biggest city in Texas, Houston, Galveston is the most urban beach attraction in the state.

Galveston Island State Park
14901 FM 3005
Galveston, TX 77554
409-737-1222
tpwd.state.tx.us/spdest/findadest/parks/galveston/

Port Aransas IB Magee Beach Park

IB Magee Beach provides the kind of beach party atmosphere Hollywood films associate with small, ocean-front towns. From primitive camping to large beach parties, IB Magee is a favorite location for Texas surfers, family vacations, and spring breakers. A strong arts community in the area makes beach activities interesting. Sand sculpture contests, volleyball, surfing, swimming, boogie boarding, wake-boarding, shelling, fishing, birding, and numerous other activities can be enjoyed at this beach. It is far enough away from city lights to offer a view of the stars without losing the merits of nearby hotel accommodations and restaurant dining.

IB Magee Beach Park
321 North on the Beach
Port Aransas, TX 78373
361-749-6117
nuecesbeachparks.com/ibpark.html

Padre Island National Seashore

To truly get away from it all, visit the Padre Island National Seashore. According to the National Park Service, Padre Island National Seashore sits on the longest undeveloped barrier island in the world. Although the northern tip of the island has been developed to within 6 miles of the park entrance, 70 miles of the island are protected from such development. Within the park, visitors can gain an unaltered glimpse into the wildlife of Texas coastal regions as the pirates of the Age of Exploration saw it including coastal prairie, dune systems, tidal flats, and the rare, hypersaline environment of the Laguna Madre.

Padre Island National Seashore
Malaquite Visitor Center
PO Box 181300
South on Park Road 22
Corpus Christi, TX 78480
361-949-8068
nps.gov/pais/

South Padre Island

This sub-tropical island location has become famous for its spring break parties and its laid-back beach style. The island can only be accessed by the 2-1/2-mile Queen Isabella Memorial Bridge and offers approximately 34 miles-by-1/2 mile of vacation resort and local residences. According to the South Padre Island website, the island was officially declared a “no-tie” zone in 1997 with offenders being offered an island T-shirt to wear instead of their formal business suits. Spring break parties on this beach have become so famous that there are fully sponsored major spring break events scheduled every year.

South Padre Island
7355 Padre Blvd.
South Padre Island, TX 78597

800-767-2373

sopadre.com/pages/about

Sources used in this article:

Eyes on Texas: Gulf Coast Region of Texas

<http://www.durangotexas.com/eyesontexas/TexasRegions/GulfCoast/gulfcoast.htm>

Texas Parks and Wildlife Department: Galveston State Park

<http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/spdest/findadest/parks/galveston/>

Texas Coast: Joe Nick Patoski: 2005

National Park Service: Padre Island Nature & Science <http://www.nps.gov/pais/naturescience/>

South Padre Island: About the Island <http://www.sopadre.com/pages/about>