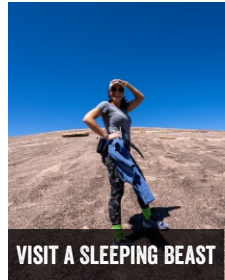
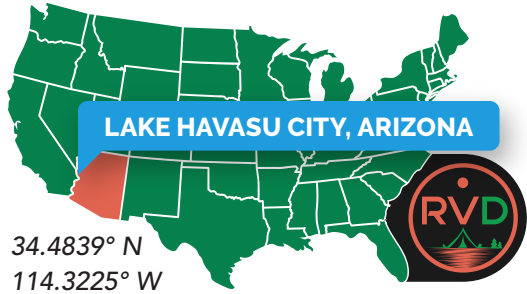


Written and Photographed by Caly J. Behymer



Tucked into the hills of Texas is a bustling yet quaint German town surrounded by more than 100 wineries and vineyards. Founded in 1846, Fredericksburg, Texas, is full of rich German heritage through the historic buildings, restaurants, shops and bakeries that dot the town. Fredericksburg offers the perfect mix of things to do, unique attractions and award-winning wine.



photo credit Tessa Otto

10 About 30 minutes north of Fredericksburg lies a giant, sleeping beast. Rising 425 feet into the air and covering 640 acres lies a massive, pink monadnock known as Enchanted Rock. This pink granite behemoth is shrouded in fantasy and mystery and is believed by many to hold magical powers. Enchanted Rock State Natural Area offers visitors more than a few things to do. More than 11 miles of hiking trails surround and cross the large granite rocks, as well as rock climbing, geocaching and camping.



photo credit Blake Meach

9 You can tour where Lyndon B. Johnson was born, raised and died. The Stonewall, Texas, ranch offers driving self-guided tours and tours to view Johnson's childhood home. Guests can also view the Johnson Settlement and the Presidential Plane and explore the visitor center, home to exhibits, artifacts and the history of Lyndon and Lady Bird Johnson.



8 No stop in Fredericksburg is complete without first visiting the Pioneer Museum. Covering 3.5 acres in the heart of downtown, the Pioneer Museum has built a small community of some of the town's original historical buildings filled with authentic relics from the 1800s. The museum walks visitors through how they founded Fredericksburg, the family life of the town's founders and how the pact made with the Comanches through the Meusebach-Comanche Treaty still stands today as the only treaty with Native Americans that has remained intact.

7 To say Fredericksburg is charming is an understatement. Spend a day walking up and down Main Street, visiting the various shops, restaurants, museums and tasting rooms. Every good German town has a Christmas store, and Fredericksburg doesn't disappoint with theirs. Be sure to grab a homemade ornament to commemorate your trip.



photo credit Trish Rawls

6 The rich German heritage shines through in Fredericksburg, meaning there is no shortage of excellent German restaurants and bakeries. Old German Bakery & Restaurant is highly rated, and rightly so. Regardless of the day of the week, you can expect this place to be busy. Open for breakfast and lunch only, be sure to get here early for an outstanding authentic German meal. Grab a bag of freshly baked German pastries on your way. Your stomach and mouth will thank you.



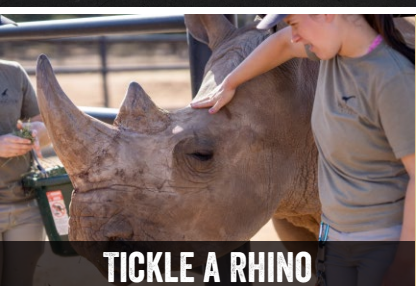
BATS GALORE



BATHE AN ELEPHANT



VISIT THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF THE PACIFIC WAR



TICKLE A RHINO



WINE

5 Want to watch something truly spectacular? Then, visit Old Tunnel State Park during bat season, May 1 through October 31. Make your reservation early and purchase your bat-viewing ticket. As the sun sets, watch as a massive colony of Mexican free-tailed bats takes flight. The bats spiral upward en masse, gaining altitude for their evening supper run. These bats can eat their weight in bugs in one night. The entire colony can consume 25 tons of moths in one night!

4 The Preserve is just north of the LBJ Ranch. It is home to Asian elephants and is dedicated to conserving and educating about these incredible animals. Guests can book an immersive experience and even help bathe an elephant. The Preserve also offers an Australian Walkabout Exhibit with kangaroos, wallabies and birds, where guests can touch some animals.

3 The museum is comprised of the George H.W. Bush Gallery (where you can find the main exhibits and where most visitors start their visit), the Admiral Nimitz Gallery located in a historic hotel, a memorial courtyard, the Japanese Garden of Peace, outdoor artifacts, a carrier aviation exhibit, a PT boat exhibit, a living history battlefield and several museum stores. When planning your visit, visit the museum's website for information on what exhibits are included with your ticket purchase, as some exhibits require an additional fee.

2 Fredericksburg's surrounding hills are home to not one but two large game conservation groups. Nestled on 100 acres is Longneck Manor, home to several giraffes, rhinos and a guest suite that overlooks the giraffe barn, complete with a large viewing window. Here, guests learn about the conservation of and education about rhinos and giraffes. The experience includes feeding giraffes and scratching a rhino's ticklish spot.

1 With more than 100 wineries and vineyards dotting the hills surrounding Fredericksburg, it will be easy to find several favorite new wines to take home. Favorite picks include Fat Ass Ranch & Winery, Texas Heritage Vineyard, Wildseed Farms Vineyard and Six Shooter Cellars. Many wineries and vineyards offer live music, light eats and tours. Be prepared for a lot of wine tasting.

With so many things to do in Fredericksburg, Texas, this top 10 is a great place to start your wine country adventure.