

7 mini honeymoons for Austin couples to explore in 5 days or less

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Honeymoons are about following the rules. Love has rules. They're about getting really stressed: making big sacrifices to get time off, trying to live up to your expectations of the best, most exciting, most romantic thing you could ever think of. They're about blowing a ton of money to celebrate blowing a ton of money. That's it, article over. Go have a traditional honeymoon.

Still here? Perhaps you sense there's a better way. All you need is yourself and your brand-new spouse. Enter the mini-moon, a trendy new concept that isn't nearly as new as its name. One of the few small wins from this pandemic has been a willingness to do things small, and to find big freedom in realizing all that planning — the bells and whistles — was never really that important. We can travel much easier now, but the greatness of a weekend-long mini-moon persists.

In celebrating a new life together, why not find out what home has to offer? Dallas, Houston, and New Orleans are all safe and wonderful choices, but let's think outside the box a bit. These seven drivable locales (if you like a road trip) rival any tropical paradise or European city, with beautiful landscapes, rich, storied cultures, and, most seductively, the accessibility to do it all again whenever you want to relive that honeymoon phase.

Austin, <30 miles

The city of bachelorette parties and music festivals is practically built around entertainment. Sometimes tourists get the best of our city, coming in ready to splurge on all the obvious stuff that we just never find an excuse to try.

Accommodations range from beautiful, historic hotels ([The Driskill](#), [Hotel Ella](#)), swanky boutique offerings ([Hotel Van Zandt](#)), and the absolutely unexpected (any number of Airstreams, tiny houses, and tree structures on Airbnb).

[Speakeasy Bar Tours](#) will show you a luxurious side of the city you probably never knew; [Miraval Austin Resort and Spa](#) offers world-class relaxation; and [Haus of Erotique](#) produces spicy shows that are sure to inspire something new in your routine.

Fredericksburg, 80 miles

Fredericksburg seems like a safe choice, but all sarcasm aside, honeymoons are not about forcing something exciting over something good. Alongside all the vineyards, [Wildseed Farms](#) focuses on the beautiful wildflowers that overtake the Hill Country every year. Explore its 200 acres for a peaceful picnic and photo ops. Shop the many antique stores for unique heirlooms you may have for the rest of your joined lives. It adds a bit of time, but consider swinging by Maverick Horseback Riding in Lockhart on your way out. They'll teach you to ride independently, if a bunch of horses following each other in a line doesn't seem especially romantic or exciting.

Caddo Lake, 350 miles

Straddling the Texas-Louisiana border, Caddo Lake is full of otherworldly beauty you won't find many other places. Bald cypress trees draped with Spanish moss have stood in almost 27,000 acres of swamp for hundreds of years; some even as long as 1,200 years. Camping is available in the [Caddo Lake State Park](#), and there are tons of private residences and hotels in nearby Shreveport (Louisiana's third-largest city). Don't miss the chance to paddle through the bayou in canoes and kayaks, and book a lot more time than you think you need. Each little inlet between the trees is its own world. This is the place to take things slow.

South Padre Island, 360 miles

The beautiful beaches of South Padre Island are the perfect tropical venue for Texans who don't want to break out a passport. This one is a resort town, so there's no shortage of things to do if you've had enough romantic beach walks. Tours revolve around dolphins, jet skis, parasails, horses, and boardwalks. The two top attractions, according to Tripadvisor, are conservation-minded: [Sea Turtle Inc.](#) rehabs its flippered friends, and the [South Padre Island Birding and Nature Center](#) frames the tropical landscape in a new way to many visitors. And, of course, if that's enough nature for one weekend, there are endless spas.

Terlingua and Marfa, 480 miles

Good news for couples who can't decide whether they prefer culture or utter solitude, together: Terlingua and Marfa, the two gems of West Texas, are must-sees connected by one of the most beautiful drives on the planet. Spend as long as you can in the desert, hiking through jaw-dropping scenery for a week in blissful silence. [Basecamp Terlingua](#) has cozy tipis, bubbles, casitas, and more under the stars for varying levels of luxury. Travel up the Rio Grande on FM 170 and stay a night in Marfa, home to the Marfa Mystery Lights, some of the coolest art and furniture stores in Texas, and the Chinati Hot Springs (a classic honeymoon spa experience, but way better).

Amarillo, 500 miles

This panhandle city is pretty far to drive on a whim, but if there were ever an excuse to do it, it's for a wacky and whimsical mini-moon. It's a little cheesy, but the [Cadillac Ranch](#) is a great stop for photos, and one of the only places to draw little graffiti tributes to your union without actually vandalizing anything. Take a stroll through the Amarillo Botanical Gardens, or opt for some proper hikes in Palo Duro Canyon State Park, which also hosts a unique outdoor musical in the summer. The Tascosa Drive-in Theater feels like a campy first date every time, and there are endless roadside attractions between Austin and Amarillo to add to the trip's spontaneous mood.

Santa Fe and Taos, 750 miles

This 11-hour drive is not for the faint of heart, but the final destination is worth every minute. (We'll still think you're cool if you hop on a plane.) Santa Fe is one of the most unique cities in the United States, with curated culture on every corner. Meow Wolf's inimitable "[House of Eternal Return](#)" fills over 70 rooms with thoughtful, surreal interactive art. It's all wrapped in a beautiful narrative about family that will tug at the heartstrings of any couple thinking of starting a family or those who already have one together. Santa Fe is not an overwhelmingly urban environment, but a getaway into the mountains at Taos opens up even more possibilities in architecture and cool trailer and ski resort stays.