

# El Paso, Texas

Home to diverse landscapes, populations, and activities, the city of El Paso thrives with booming industries, extensive history, and valued cultures. Because of its location at the foot of the Rocky Mountains, along the Rio Grande, and between the border of Mexico and New Mexico, El Paso serves as a hub for international tourism and commerce.

El Paso is the sixth largest city in Texas, with a population of over 600,000. The amazing skyline you see represents decades of commercial growth and a uniting of cultures. The railroad serves both for travel through the sprawling city and as transportation for the manufacturing industry. The arrival of the railroad in 1881 brought new businesses to the area and set a foundation for continued growth.

You can see evidence of several of the industries that operate in El Paso. The large labor force attracts companies dealing in oil, ore, sand, gravel, and cement. The proximity of the Rio Grande for irrigation allows for agricultural endeavors such as grapes and cotton near the city.

Originally named El Paso del Norte, meaning pass of the north, the cities of Juarez in Mexico and El Paso in Texas at one time were united. The city became a gateway for trade between Mexico and the United States, especially during prohibition when Americans traveled to Mexico for alcohol. During the Mexican War, border issues developed as America established “El Paso” as the American side and “El Paso del Norte” as the Mexican side. Eventually El Paso del Norte became Ciudad Juarez to ease the confusion, since it is located south of El Paso.

To learn about the history and importance of El Paso, visit the Chamizal National Memorial, administered by the National Park Service. Established in 1963, Chamizal signifies the settlement of more than 100 years of boundary disputes between the United States and Mexico. The Memorial serves as a cultural center dedicated to fostering national friendship, understanding, and trust between the two countries.

El Paso citizens celebrate their diverse and merging cultures with numerous festivals and events. Featured in local parks and gathering spaces are live Mariachi bands, art shows, ethnic foods, and theatrical events. Outdoor recreation is popular due to

the year-round mild climate and such varied natural landscapes as mountains, the Rio Grande River, deserts, and a volcanic crater.

El Paso thrives historically, economically, and culturally as Latino Americans and Anglo Americans merge customs. The beauty of the landscape, the active industries, and the historical and cultural values will continue to create challenges and opportunities.

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