

San Marcos History and Today

The beautiful city of San Marcos is located along Interstate 35 between Austin and San Antonio. The city was incorporated in 1877 and has been honored with listings in the National Register of Historic Places due to the restoration and preservation of significant late nineteenth and early twentieth century buildings.

The railroad brought growth and prosperity to numerous small Texas towns along its routes, and it had that same impact when it came to San Marcos. In 1881 the International- Great Northern Railway came through San Marcos and by 1890 the population had grown from around 700 to over 2000. Shortly after the railroad came to town, the Southwest Texas State Normal School opened its doors, which now is called Texas State University. Today you can walk through the University's gothic and modern buildings, which were constructed over the last 100 years.

Close to campus lies the downtown area where you can view other historic buildings special to San Marcos. For decades these historic buildings have housed local businesses, shopping venues, and restaurants. Today this downtown area is a great place for locals, students and guests to grab a relaxing brunch and do some boutique shopping.

Located near the Texas State University Campus, which is on the west side of our tracks, is the San Marcos River; an ideal hot spot for nature enthusiasts. The river has diverse uses ranging from agriculture to recreation, and also meets the domestic needs of almost 2 million South Central Texas users. In addition to serving local humans, the springs that feed into the river provide a home to several threatened or endangered species, including the Texas Blind Salamander, Fountain Darter, and Texas Wild Rice.

People come from all around the state to enjoy summer recreation in the waters of the San Marcos River. Visit San Marcos to enjoy recreational activities such as glass bottom boat rides, canoeing, swimming, snorkeling, and scuba diving. Campgrounds and RV parks are nestled downstream of the San Marcos River, which allows guests to stay overnight and enjoy even more of what the river and surrounding communities have to offer.

If you're in the mood for a different activity after enjoying the area's natural beauty, the outskirts of San Marcos are known for tremendous shopping. From the train, you can see the San Marcos outlet malls, filled with throngs of travelers attracted from all over the world. This shopping venue gained national attention in 2006, when an ABC program called "The View" named San Marcos Outlets the third-best place to shop in the world, due to the large variety of well known name brands discounted by 25 to 65 percent.

The long-standing settlement of San Marcos has created a unique architectural and historical setting for residents, students, and tourists to enjoy relaxed dining, recreation, and shopping. If you are a history buff or simply enjoy shopping and good food, San Marcos is the place to come and relax.

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