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HILL COUNTRY VISITOR MAGAZINE

FEBRUARY 2025

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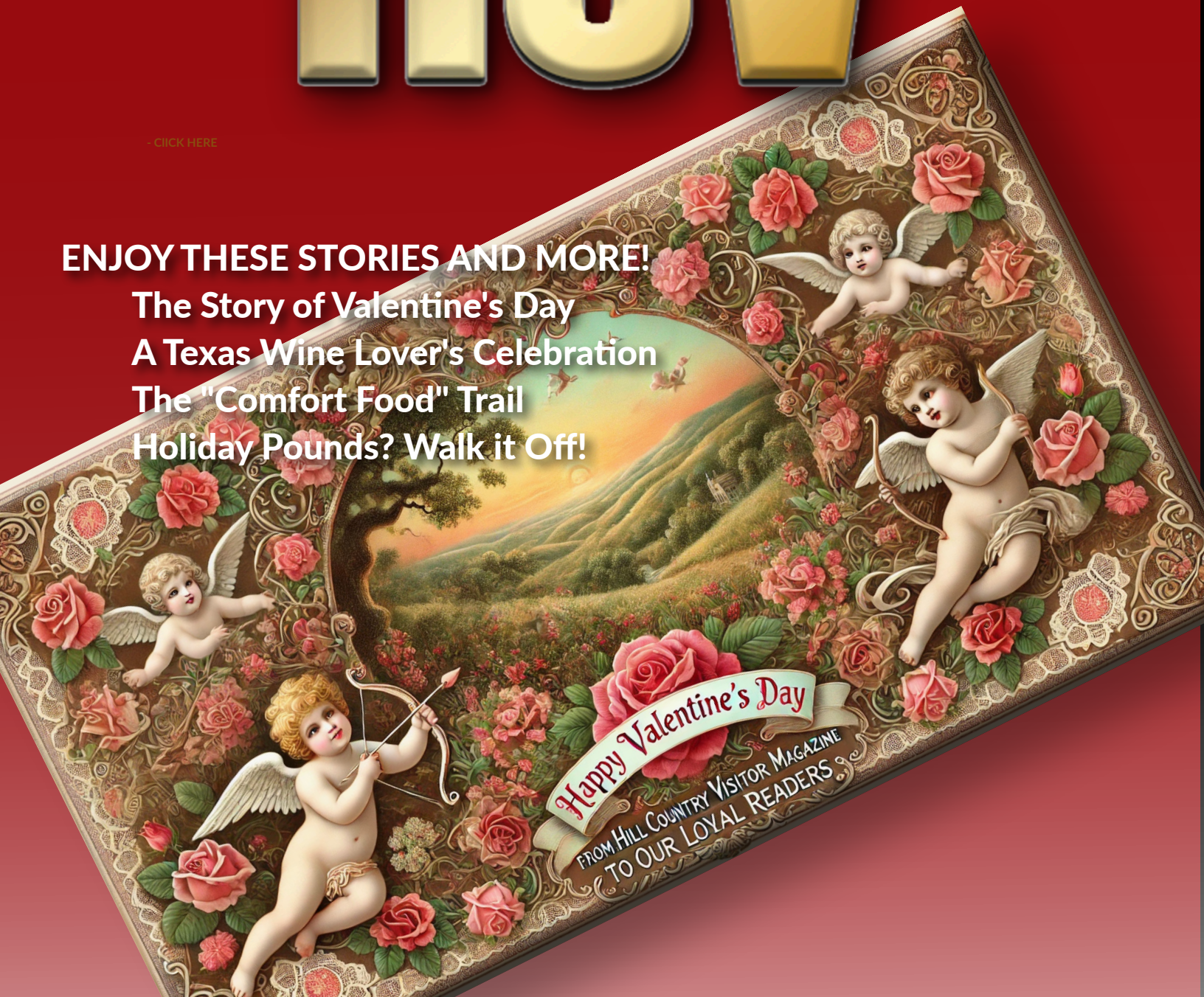
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FEBRUARY 2025

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Hill Country Visitor Magazine
is published
by Peeled Onion Publishing,
Marvin Willis owner.

PEELED ONION PUBLISHING
160 INGRAM HILLS ROAD
INGRAM, TX 78025
The editor is Joe Houde.
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The Story of Valentine's Day



Valentine's Day, celebrated on February 14, is a day dedicated to love and affection, with roots in both historical and cultural traditions. Its origins trace back to ancient Rome, where the festival of Lupercalia was held in mid-February to purify the city and promote fertility. Later, the Catholic Church Christianized the holiday, dedicating it to St. Valentine, a martyr whose exact identity remains unclear, as several Valentines appear in early Christian history.

One popular legend describes Valentine as a 3rd-century Roman priest who defied Emperor Claudius II's decree banning young men from

marrying, as the emperor believed single men made better soldiers. Valentine secretly performed weddings for young lovers and was eventually arrested and executed. Before his death, he is said to have written a letter signed "Your Valentine" to the jailer's daughter, inspiring the tradition of romantic notes.

By the Middle Ages, St. Valentine became associated with courtly love, particularly in England and France, where February 14 was believed to mark the start of birds' mating season. This connection to romance laid the groundwork for the modern celebration.

Valentine's Day began to evolve into a commercialized

holiday in the late 18th and early 19th centuries when it became popular to exchange handwritten notes of affection. However, the holiday as we know it today was significantly shaped by the rise of the greeting card industry. In the mid-19th century, Esther A. Howland, often called the "Mother of the American Valentine," began producing and selling elaborate, hand-crafted Valentine's cards in the United States. Her efforts, combined with advances in printing technology, made it easier and more affordable to mass-produce cards.

By the early 20th century, companies like Hallmark capitalized on the holiday, turning

it into a commercial juggernaut. Greeting card companies promoted Valentine's Day as an opportunity to express love not only to romantic partners but also to friends and family. This marketing push popularized the exchange of cards, along with chocolates, flowers, and other gifts, cementing the day as a major cultural and economic event.

Today, Valentine's Day is celebrated worldwide, with its enduring appeal lying in the universal human desire for connection. While its romantic roots remain, the holiday has expanded to include expressions of affection for friends and loved ones, largely thanks to the greeting card industry's influence in shaping the way we celebrate.

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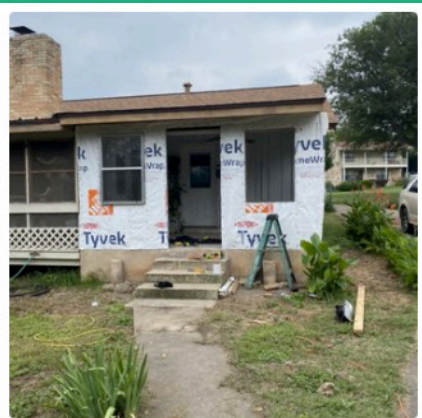
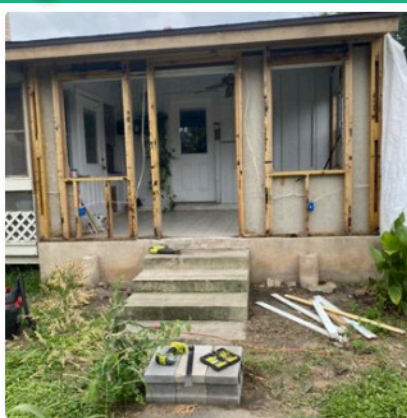
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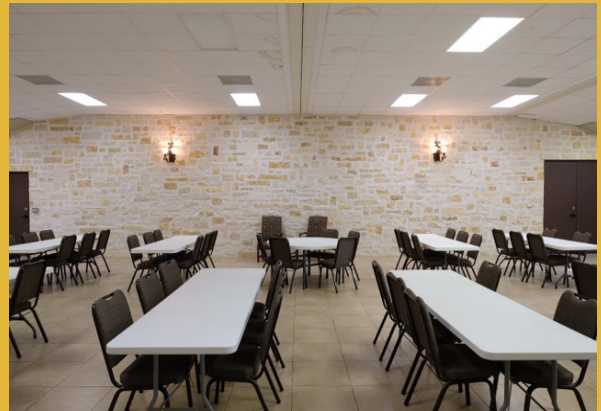
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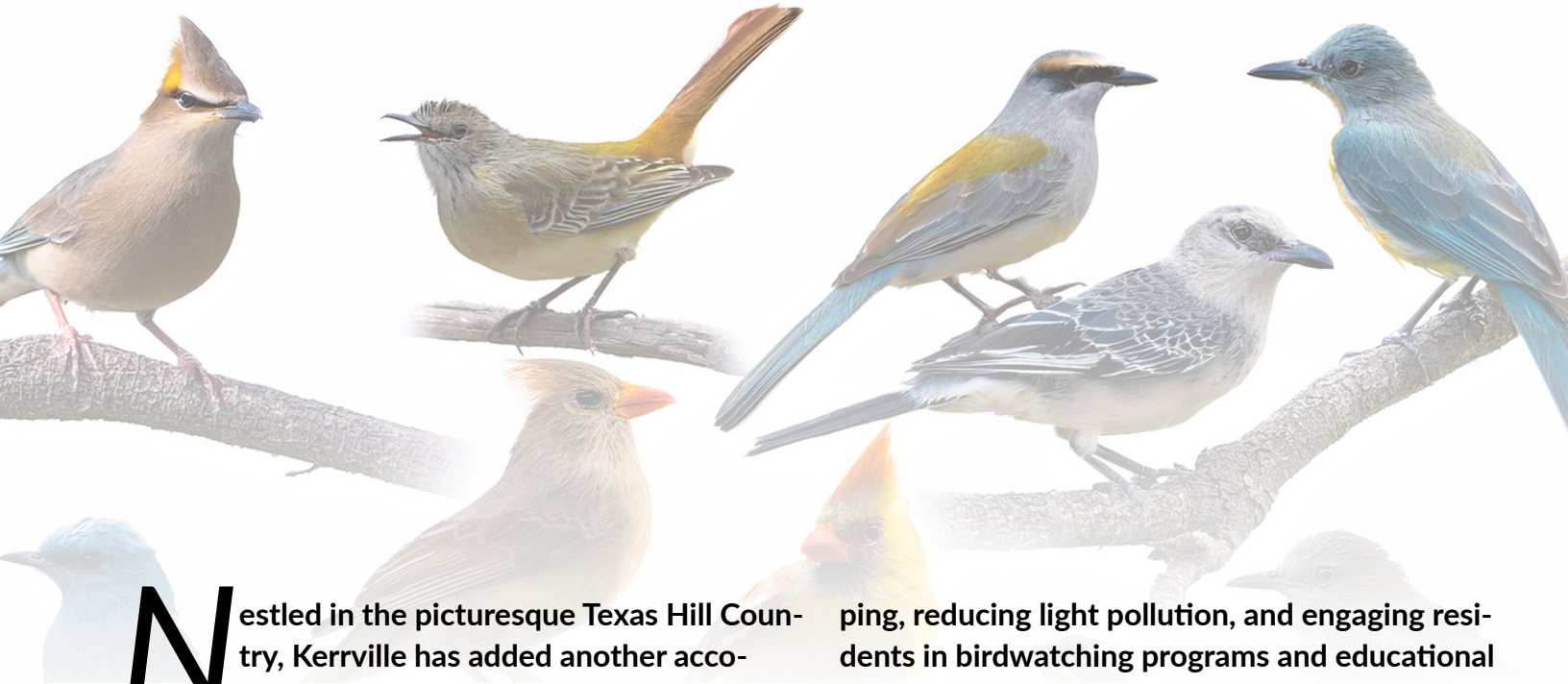
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Kerrville Joins the Prestigious Bird City Texas List



Nestled in the picturesque Texas Hill Country, Kerrville has added another accolade to its name: Bird City Texas. This recognition, awarded by Audubon Texas and the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, celebrates communities dedicated to creating bird-friendly environments through sustainability, habitat preservation, and community engagement.

Kerrville joins Fredericksburg and Dripping Springs in a growing network of Hill Country communities committed to protecting native and migratory bird populations. Each city has taken significant strides in environmental stewardship, from conserving natural habitats to educating the public about the importance of birds to the ecosystem. These efforts reflect a regional dedication to preserving biodiversity and fostering an appreciation for nature.

Earning the Bird City Texas designation was no small feat for Kerrville. The city's journey involved community-driven initiatives led by local organizations and volunteers. These efforts included creating bird habitats, promoting native land-

scaping, reducing light pollution, and engaging residents in birdwatching programs and educational outreach. Parks like Riverside Nature Center, Louise Hays Park, and Kerrville-Schreiner Park stand as prime examples of how urban spaces can coexist with nature, providing safe havens for species like painted buntings, scissor-tailed flycatchers, and black-chinned hummingbirds.

Mayor Judy Eychner expressed her pride in the accomplishment, stating, "Kerrville has always been deeply connected to nature, and this recognition as a Bird City Texas further cements our commitment to protecting the environment for future generations. We're thrilled to join our neighbors in Fredericksburg and Dripping Springs in creating a Hill Country that values and protects our birdlife."

This honor is not just a feather in Kerrville's cap but also a call to action. Residents and visitors are encouraged to participate in bird counts, workshops, and other programs to learn how their everyday actions can support the area's avian populations.



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A Texas Wine Lover's Celebration



Every year, wine lovers from across the state and beyond eagerly await the Texas Wine Lovers Celebration, and for good reason. From January 29 to February 23, 2025, the picturesque Hill Country transforms into a wine enthusiast's dream. The event offers the perfect excuse to slow down, sip exceptional wines, and immerse yourself in the beauty and charm of Central Texas.

Imagine starting your journey in Fredericksburg at Becker Vineyards. A tasting room is tucked along Main Street; this winery is renowned for its Bordeaux-style reds and vibrant, floral Viognier. As you savor a glass of their Iconoclast Cabernet Sauvignon, with its rich blackcurrant and spice notes, you can't help but feel the warmth of Texas hospitality radiating from every corner.

Pedernales Cellars is a short drive away in Stonewall, a haven for those who adore Spanish and Rhone-style wines. Their Tempranillo, with earthy tones and a hint of cherry, pairs beautifully with

stories shared among friends. If you're more inclined toward whites, the Viognier Reserve, with its tropical fruit aroma and balanced elegance, is a treat that transports your taste buds to sunnier days.

Just down the road, you'll find Kuhlman Cellars, where wine and food meet in perfect harmony. Sitting at their tasting table, you might be presented with a glass of Alluvé, a Bordeaux-style blend with dark fruit flavors and smooth tannins. Pair it with their curated culinary bites, and you'll understand why this winery is beloved by locals and visitors alike.

Heading east, Spicewood Vineyard greets you with rolling hills and a laid-back atmosphere. Their Texas Tempranillo, bold and robust with notes of cherry and leather, captures the essence of the region's terroir. For a lighter option, the Estate Sauvignon Blanc offers a zesty citrus refreshment that feels like summer in a bottle.

In Hye, the vibe shifts to lively music and community spirit at William Chris Vineyards. Their Mourvèdre stands out, with layers of blackberry, black pepper, and dried herbs that unfold like a

story in every sip. If you prefer something lighter, their Rosé of Mourvèdre, with its strawberry and citrus notes, is perfect for a lazy afternoon on their patio.

As the day winds down, you might find yourself in Driftwood at Fall Creek Vineyards, one of Texas's oldest wineries. Here, a

glass of Chenin Blanc, with crisp apple and honeysuckle flavors, is the ideal accompaniment to the sunset over the Hill Country. Or perhaps you'll opt for the Meritus, a luxurious red blend aged in French oak that feels like a celebration.

End your adventure at Duchman Family Winery, also in Driftwood, where Italian varietals reign supreme. Their Vermentino, with its bright, citrusy notes, pairs perfectly with light Mediterranean fare, while the Sangiovese delivers rich cherry and raspberry flavors that make it a favorite for pasta lovers.

Every stop along the way offers a unique story, from the winemakers' dedication to their craft to the natural beauty of the Hill Country itself. Whether you're a seasoned wine aficionado or just someone looking for a delightful escape, the Texas Wine Lovers Celebration promises an unforgettable experience.

So, grab your tickets, plan your route, and prepare to be enchanted. With every sip, every view, and every warm Texas smile, you'll discover why the Hill Country is a must-visit destination for wine lovers. Cheers to new adventures and the simple joy of a great glass of wine!

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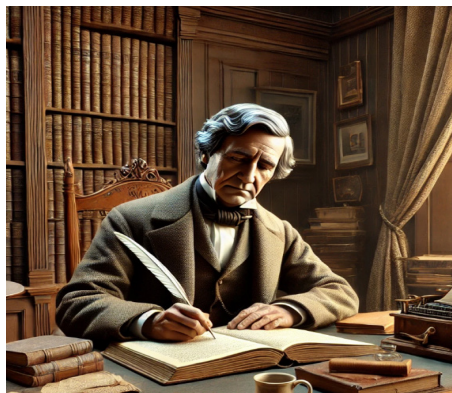
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5 Timeless Emerson Quotes to Jumpstart the New Year

by Sonny Melendrez



Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803–1882) was an American philosopher, essayist, poet, and leader of the transcendentalist movement. His writings emphasized self-reliance, individualism, and the interconnectedness of humanity and nature. A true pioneer of American thought, Emerson inspired countless individuals to trust their intuition and embrace their unique path. His philosophy resonates, offering timeless wisdom for navigating life's challenges with courage and authenticity.

These five powerful quotes capture his profound insights, offering inspiration as we enter the new year.

1. **“Without ambition, one starts nothing. Without work, one finishes nothing. The prize will not be sent to you. You have to win it.”**

Emerson's words remind us that dreams remain dormant without action. Waiting for the perfect time or ideal circumstances only delays progress. Taking even the most minor step toward your goals creates momentum, sending a breeze into the sails of your aspirations. Ambition lights the fire, but consistent effort keeps it burning.

2. **“There is a time in every man's education when he arrives at the conviction that envy is ignorance; that imitation is suicide; that he must take himself for better, for worse, as his portion; that though the wide universe is full of good, no kernel of nourishing corn can come to him but through his toil bestowed on that plot of ground which is given to him to till.”**

Emerson's insight into the futility of envy and imitation is particularly relevant in the age of social media, where comparison often breeds discontent. True fulfillment comes from tending to one's own “plot of ground”—developing one's unique talents and embracing the joy of one's personal journey. By investing energy into one's authentic self, one cultivates the life one was meant to live.

3. **“Most of the shadows of this life are caused by standing in one's sunshine.”**

This quote gently reminds us not to be our own greatest obstacle. Often, our fears, self-doubt, or over-analysis block the brightness of our potential. By embracing our imperfection, we allow our inner light to shine freely.

4. **“Always do what you are afraid to do.”**

Emerson's challenge to confront fear head-on speaks to the transformative power of stepping outside our comfort zones. Like a muscle that grows stronger with resistance, the mind flourishes when faced with challenges.

Running toward what scares us often reveals untapped potential and opens doors to new possibilities.

5. **“The purpose of life is not to be happy. It is to be useful, honorable, compassionate, and have it make some difference that you have lived and lived well.”**

This profound quote reframes the purpose of life, urging us to look beyond fleeting happiness and toward lasting impact. Emerson challenges us to live with intention, dedicating ourselves to actions that reflect integrity, kindness, and purpose. True fulfillment comes from knowing that our existence has added value to the world and made it a better place.

Ralph Waldo Emerson's philosophy encourages us to embrace self-reliance, take bold action, and trust in the power of authenticity. His quotes challenge us to overcome fear, avoid comparison, and commit to meaningful work, lighting a path for personal growth and fulfillment. As we enter the new year, let Emerson's timeless wisdom propel you toward a life of intention, courage, and unwavering purpose.

The Comfort Food Trail: A Winter Journey Through the Hill Country



January in the Texas Hill Country offers a serene landscape, perfect for indulging in hearty comfort foods that warm both body and soul. From crispy fried chicken to decadent pies, each stop on this trail provides a taste of local tradition and hospitality.

Fredericksburg –

A New Chapter of Comfort

Begin your journey at Woerner's in Fredericksburg, located at 210 W Live Oak St. This recently relocated favorite continues to serve its renowned golden, crispy fried chicken, accompanied by tangy potato salad and fresh-baked bread. The inviting atmosphere makes it a must-visit for comfort food enthusiasts.

Kerrville –

Chicken-Fried Steak Perfection

In Kerrville, Billy Gene's Restaurant at 1489 Junction Hwy is celebrated for its chicken-fried steak—perfectly breaded, tender, and topped with creamy gravy.

Served alongside mashed potatoes and green beans, and offering scenic views of the Guadalupe River, it's a dining experience that embodies Texas comfort.

Comfort –

Chili and Pie in a Quaint Setting

The aptly named town of Comfort is home to High's Café and Store at 726 High St. Their rich, hearty chili is ideal for a cool day, and the homemade pies—whether pecan, apple, or chocolate silk—provide a sweet conclusion to your meal in this charming locale.

Boerne –

Legendary Breakfast Tacos

In Boerne, Mary's Tacos at 518 E Blanco Rd is renowned for its breakfast tacos, generously filled with options like carne guisada, barbacoa, or classic eggs and sausage. For lunch, their cheese-topped enchiladas offer a savory taste of South Texas comfort.

Blanco –

BBQ & Creamy Mac & Cheese

No comfort food trail is complete without BBQ, and Old 300 BBQ at 318 4th St in Blanco delivers with tender,

smoky brisket. The rich, creamy mac & cheese stands out as a perfect indulgence, especially when paired with a slice of jalapeño cornbread.

Marble Falls –

Pie Heaven at the Blue Bonnet

Conclude your journey at Blue Bonnet Café in Marble Falls, located at 211 US-281. Famous for its "Pie Happy Hour" (Monday–Friday from 3:00 to 5:00 PM), this establishment offers some of Texas's best pies. Whether you choose coconut cream, chocolate meringue, or classic apple, each slice embodies small-town comfort and nostalgia.

A Slice of Comfort in Every Bite

The Hill Country Comfort Food Trail is more than a culinary adventure; it's a journey through the heart of Texas, where tradition and hospitality are served in every dish. From the savory to the sweet, these stops offer a true taste of comfort that's perfect for the winter season.

Bring your appetite and enjoy the flavors of the Hill Country!

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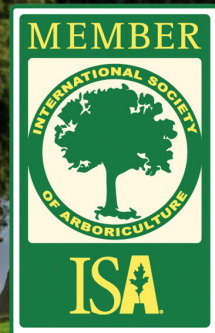
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Holiday Pounds? Walk it Off!



The holidays bring joy, family gatherings, and indulgent feasts. But once the season of cookies, pies, and second helpings fades, many of us face the inevitable aftermath: a few extra pounds. What better way to jumpstart your post-holiday reset than by hitting the trails? Walking is not just an effective way to shed those holiday pounds—it's a pathway to improved health and well-being.

Regular walking strengthens your heart, lowers blood pressure, and improves circulation, reducing your risk of heart disease. It's a weight-bearing activity that builds bone density and improves balance, which is especially important as we age. Beyond the physical

rewards, walking in nature has profound mental health benefits, including reducing stress, boosting mood, and enhancing overall mental clarity. Plus, it's low-impact, accessible to almost everyone, and offers the bonus of immersing you in nature's tranquility.

Suppose you're ready to lace up your hiking boots. In that case, the Texas Hill Country awaits with open arms, offering trails that combine stunning scenery with the perfect opportunity to move, sweat, and reconnect with yourself. Beyond just burning calories, these hikes will leave you inspired by the raw beauty of Texas, from sprawling granite domes to cascading waterfalls.

Let's journey through some of the region's most beloved hiking destinations, each promising a chance to step away from the holiday hustle, embrace a healthier, more adventurous

you, and reap the countless rewards of walking.

Amidst the rolling hills and wide-open skies of the Texas Hill Country lies a hidden treasure trove for adventurers: an array of hiking trails that wind through some of the state's most scenic and diverse terrain. Each trail offers its unique experience, inviting hikers to explore rugged landscapes, shimmering rivers, and breathtaking vistas.

For those seeking an unforgettable journey, the story begins at Enchanted Rock State Natural Area near Fredericksburg. Rising like a sentinel above the surrounding countryside, the massive pink granite dome is both a challenge and a reward. The Summit Trail tests your endurance with its steep ascent but rewards you with sweeping panoramic views at the top. If you're looking for some-



thing less demanding, the Loop Trail encircles the rock, offering a tranquil 4.6-mile trek. Pro tip: Reserve your spot early, especially on weekends, as this gem is a popular destination. Walking these trails strengthens your body and helps clear your mind with the vast, open vistas.

A short drive west of Bandera brings you to Lost Maples State Natural Area, a haven for those enchanted by fall foliage. The trails come alive in autumn with vibrant reds and oranges, courtesy of the park's famous maple trees. The East Trail and West Trail, with their limestone cliffs and scenic overlooks, promise a peaceful retreat into nature. Walking here allows you to absorb the benefits of forest bathing—a practice that enhances mental clarity and reduces stress while building stamina and endurance.

In Johnson City, Pedernales Falls State Park offers a mix of trails that cater to all levels. The Wolf Mountain Trail, a 7.6-mile journey, takes hikers past rolling hills and along serene riverbanks, while the shorter Twin Falls Nature Trail is perfect for beginners. As you trek along these trails, your body works harder to adapt to uneven terrain, improving your balance and coordination—a workout for both mind and body.

Further south, the allure of Garner

State Park in Concan calls to those who love a mix of challenge and beauty. Climbing the Old Baldy Trail is a rite of passage, offering a steep but rewarding climb to an awe-inspiring bluff view. For explorers seeking something more hidden, the Crystal Cave Trail reveals secrets buried beneath the surface. As you hike here, you're building muscle and boosting your cardiovascular health in a setting that feels worlds away from the holiday chaos.

Near Marble Falls, the Balcones Canyonlands National Wildlife Refuge beckons with its Doeskin Ranch Trail System. These interconnected loops take hikers through a medley of diverse habitats, each turn revealing a new perspective of Texas' natural beauty. Walking through varied ecosystems engages different muscle groups, enhancing your physical fitness while you marvel at the region's beauty.

For a riverside adventure, Guadalupe River State Park in Spring Branch delivers. The Painted Bunting Trail and the Bald Cypress Trail invite you to wander beneath towering trees, listen to the soothing rush of the river, and marvel at the wildlife that calls this area home. Walking alongside water has a calming effect on the mind, reducing cortisol levels and promoting relaxation.

In Bandera, the Hill Country State Natural Area offers a playground for outdoor enthusiasts. With over 40 miles of multi-use trails, including the Spring Branch Loop and Merriek Mile, it's a place where rugged terrain meets wide-open skies. This park challenges your endurance while rewarding you with unparalleled views—a perfect balance for physical exertion and mental rejuvenation.

Finally, no Hill Country hiking story is complete without a visit to Colorado Bend State Park, near the small town of Bend. The journey to Gorman Falls, a stunning 70-foot waterfall, is a 3-mile round trip filled with anticipation and reward. Walking here builds leg strength and offers a meditative experience as you tune into the rhythm of your steps and the soothing sounds of the cascading water.

Each trail in the Texas Hill Country tells a story of its own, inviting hikers to become part of the narrative. With every step, you'll feel stronger, more centered, and more connected to the world around you. So pack your gear, lace up, and discover the heart of Texas—one step at a time. Walking isn't just exercise; it's a journey toward better health and a better you.

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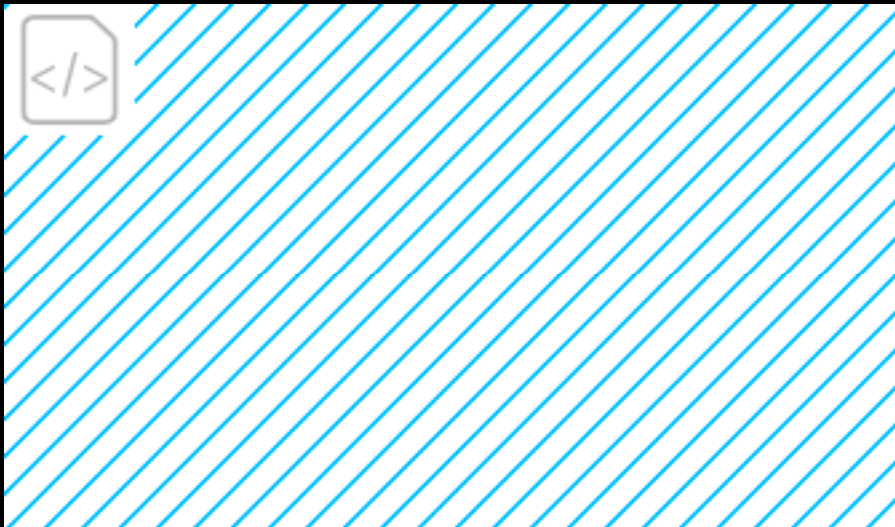
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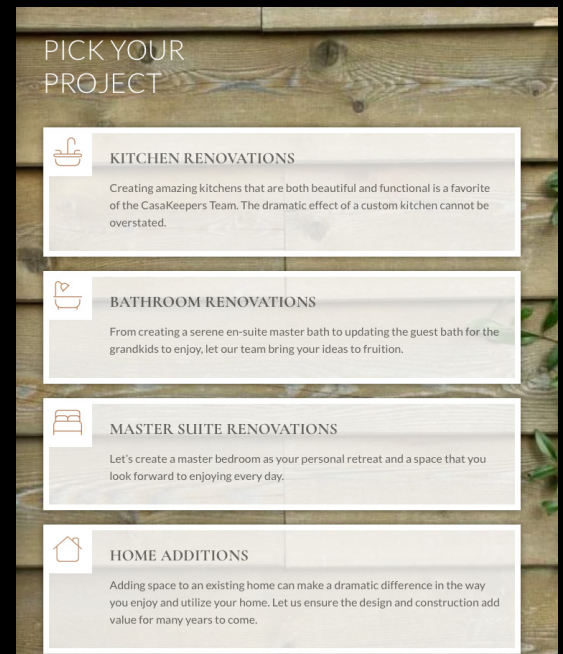
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Christmas Cactus: Care and Pruning

by Carol Seminara



For years, I've joked that my 10-year-old fuchsia-blooming grand dame plant, which always dazzles in November, was a Thanksgiving cactus.

Well, what do you know? There is such a thing. There's also an Easter cactus and the more commonly known Christmas cactus. They all bloom at different times, generally close to the holiday for which they are named.

Collectively, they are known as holiday cacti, but this is where it gets interesting and complicated: they are not all members of the same plant family, and none are actually cacti. Christmas and Thanksgiving holiday cacti belong to the same genus—*Schlumbergera*—but are different

species: truncate and bridges, respectively. Easter holiday cacti are members of the *Rhipsalidopsis* family, genus *Gaertnerril*.

All holiday cacti are succulents. Here's a quick guide to understanding the difference between succulents and cacti: besides the fact that cacti are a specific plant family, all cacti have areoles, where the spines grow. Cacti flowers also emerge from areoles just above the spines, and areoles can develop into more branches. Succulents do not have areoles. Cacti are native to North and South America.

Succulents are not a specific plant family. The term "succulent" refers to the plant's ability to store water in its fleshy tissues. This trait is not a botanical classification, and to complicate matters further, all cacti are

considered stem succulents (generally storing water in their thick stems), while other succulents primarily store water in their fleshy leaves, stems, and sometimes roots.

One more bit of information before we discuss care and pruning: you can identify which type of holiday cactus you have by examining the leaves. Thanksgiving cacti have very pointed leaves with claw-shaped projections along the edges of their rounded leaves and tend to grow upright. Christmas cacti have more scalloped, teardrop-shaped leaves and drooping stems. Easter cacti have smooth, glossy, more triangular leaves. Of course, an even easier way to identify which holiday succulent you have is by observing when it blooms: Thanksgiving varieties bloom from late October



to November, Easter varieties bloom in spring, and Christmas varieties bloom from late November to early January.

If you have a Thanksgiving or Christmas variety, both prefer bright, diffused sunlight, ideally in an east- or west-facing window. Too much direct sun can scorch the leaves. Christmas cacti need watering once a week, while Thanksgiving cacti require less water and do well with watering every other week. Both should never dry out completely. Check to see if the soil is moist 2 inches down. If it is, water your plant. Most horticulturists recommend using filtered water since these tropical plants do not tolerate

lime or excessive calcium.

Caring for Easter cacti is quite similar, although many plant experts suggest repotting them every two years.

Pruning can enhance the plant's overall health, control its size, and help it bloom more profusely. Blooms appear on the tips of branches, and pruning can also provide a source of new plants for sharing.

The best time to prune Thanksgiving and/or Christmas varieties is just after the plant has finished blooming, typically in January or February. In addition to removing dead or yellowed segments, this technique helps to open up the center of the plant

and improve its shape. Be cautious not to remove more than one-third of the plant's tips, or you may unnecessarily stress it.

If the plant seems to have outgrown its pot, you can prune some of the root ball. Generally speaking, these plants prefer cozy pots. If you choose to trim the root ball, practice good pruning hygiene (see below) and repot it in the same container after thoroughly cleaning it, using well-draining soil with a good amount of organic matter.

When pruning, use sharp, sterilized pruning shears (which are usually smaller than regular gardening shears). To sterilize pruning shears, wipe the blades with a solution containing at least 70% isopropyl alcohol and dry them thoroughly before use. Cut plant stems where two pads meet at the joint. For propagating purposes, ensure that the cut pieces have at least two or three pads.

Allow your cuttings to dry out for at least a day or two; otherwise, they may absorb too much water and rot before they have a chance to generate roots.

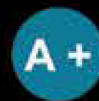
Once the cuttings are dry, place each in a container filled with a cacti/succulent soil mix. Water well and position the containers in a bright, warm spot.

One quick note: deadheading—removing old, faded flowers—is different from pruning. Deadheading isn't necessary for holiday cacti, but it does enhance the plant's appearance by eliminating spent blooms.

With minimal fuss and some general care, your holiday cacti can bring you years of colorful celebration, no matter the season.

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The Heart of the Community

In the heart of every vibrant community lies a simple yet powerful truth: supporting local businesses is the lifeblood of a thriving local economy. Shop Local First embodies this belief, offering more than just a slogan—it's a movement that strengthens the bonds between residents, businesses, and the unique culture that makes each community special.

Picture this: a bustling neighborhood filled with independent cafes, family-owned stores, and artisan shops, each offering something you won't find in the aisles of a big-box retailer. These businesses are more than just storefronts; they are reflections of the community's character, shaped by its people, history, and values. Shop Local First aims to preserve and amplify this identity by encouraging residents to choose local establishments over large chains or faceless online retailers.

The impact is profound. Every dollar spent at a local business generates more economic activity within the community, supporting jobs, fostering growth, and creating a ripple effect that benefits everyone. But Shop Local First doesn't just stop at the economics—it's about making the experience of shopping locally more accessible and rewarding.

Through the program, participating businesses offer exclusive rewards and loyalty benefits, giving customers tangible reasons to keep their dollars close to home. These incentives aren't just transactions; they're the beginning of meaningful relationships between local businesses and the people they serve. Over time, these connections build a shared sense of pride and investment in the community.

Perhaps the most heartwarming aspect of Shop Local First is

its dedication to honoring those who serve. First responders, police officers, firefighters, medical personnel, and educators—all the everyday heroes who dedicate their lives to the well-being of others—receive free Shop Local First cards. These cards grant them access to exclusive discounts and rewards at participating local businesses. It's a simple yet powerful way for the community to say "thank you" and recognize their contributions.

Beyond the financial and social benefits, Shop Local First helps communities preserve their unique charm and heritage. Local businesses often reflect the soul of an area, whether it's a boutique that celebrates local craftsmanship, a bakery with recipes passed down through generations, or a bookstore filled with titles curated for the community's tastes. Supporting these establishments ensures that future generations will experience the same cultural richness and vibrancy.

The program reminds us that every purchase we make is a choice with far-reaching consequences. When we shop locally, we're not just buying goods or services—we're sustaining jobs, supporting dreams, and contributing to the resilience of our community. We're choosing to invest in our neighbors and to build a stronger, more connected, and more sustainable future.

For residents and visitors alike, Shop Local First is more than a shopping initiative—it's a way of life. It's a reminder that small decisions, like where we shop, can have a big impact. And as more people embrace this philosophy, the movement grows, creating a network of communities that thrive together, celebrate their individuality, and honor

those who make them stronger. In the end, Shop Local First is about sustaining the heart of the community, one purchase at a time.



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Chicken Soup: Good for What Ails You

by Coral Stone

You know how your mom, grandma, or even your favorite aunt always insisted on chicken soup when you were sick? Turns out, they were onto something—it's not just comfort food; it's legit good for you.



Think about it. That warm broth

can do wonders for a stuffy nose and keeps you hydrated when you don't feel like drinking water. And if you make it with the right ingredients, it's basically a bowl of nutrients. Chicken gives you protein and this thing called cysteine that's great for your body. Carrots? Full of vitamin A. Onions? Packed with vitamin C. And the stock? It's like a multivitamin with zinc, calcium, and magnesium. Plus, the love someone puts into making soup for you is its own kind of medicine. You feel cared for, and that makes everything a little better.

Chicken soup isn't just a modern thing, either. People have been making it for ages. In ancient China, they called it "yang food" because it was supposed to warm you up and give you energy. And there was this famous 12th-century doctor, Moses Maimonides, who swore by it for respiratory problems. (Okay, he also thought it might help with leprosy, but hey, nobody's perfect.)

These days, people still call it "Jewish penicillin" because it's such a classic cure for colds. Even a scientist, Dr. Stephen Rennard, studied it and said it might actually help, though he admitted more research is needed. But honestly, when someone hands you a steaming bowl of homemade chicken soup, you're not thinking about science. You're thinking, "This is love in a bowl."

Every family has their own recipe, but they all work the same magic. If you don't have one, there's a simple version in Mark Bittman's *How to Cook Everything: The Basics*. It takes a couple of hours, but trust me, it's so worth it.

So, next time you or someone you care about feels crummy, skip the pharmacy aisle and make a pot of chicken soup. It's warm, delicious, and it just might be the oldest—and tastiest—medicine around.

Chicken Stock and Chicken Noodle Soup

Makes 4 servings, plus extra chicken

Ingredients:

One 3- to 4-lb. chicken, cut into parts
1 large onion, cut in half
4 large cloves of garlic
3 large carrots: one to cook whole and two to chop
3 large celery ribs: one to cook whole, two to chop
2 dried bay leaves
6 sprigs fresh parsley
Salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste
½ lb small pasta, like shells or orzo

Method:

In a big pot, put chicken pieces, an onion, garlic, a carrot, a celery stalk, bay leaves, and parsley. Add 8 cups of water.

Bring to a boil, then lower the heat to keep it gently bubbling. Cover and simmer for 30-40 minutes, stirring every 15 minutes. Add water if needed to keep the chicken covered.

To check if the chicken is done, poke it with a knife—it should go in easily, and the meat should be fully cooked and maybe falling off the bone.

Remove the chicken from the pot and let it cool. Take off the skin and shred the meat into small pieces. Set aside 2 cups for the soup and save the rest for later (like chicken salad).

Put the chicken bones back in the pot and simmer for another 15-30 minutes.

Strain the liquid into a new pot, pressing the veggies to get all the juice out. Throw away the bones and cooked veggies. Skim the fat off the top. You should have about 7 cups of broth. Add water if needed and season with salt and pepper. Save 2 cups for the soup and freeze or refrigerate the rest.

In the large pot, heat 2 cups of broth. Add chopped carrots and celery and cook until they're as soft as you like (10-30 minutes).

Stir in pasta and the 2 cups of chicken. Simmer until the pasta is tender, about 5-10 minutes.

Taste, add salt and pepper if needed, and garnish with parsley or celery leaves.

Serve and enjoy!

Tip: You can add peas, use rice instead of pasta, or adjust spices to your taste!



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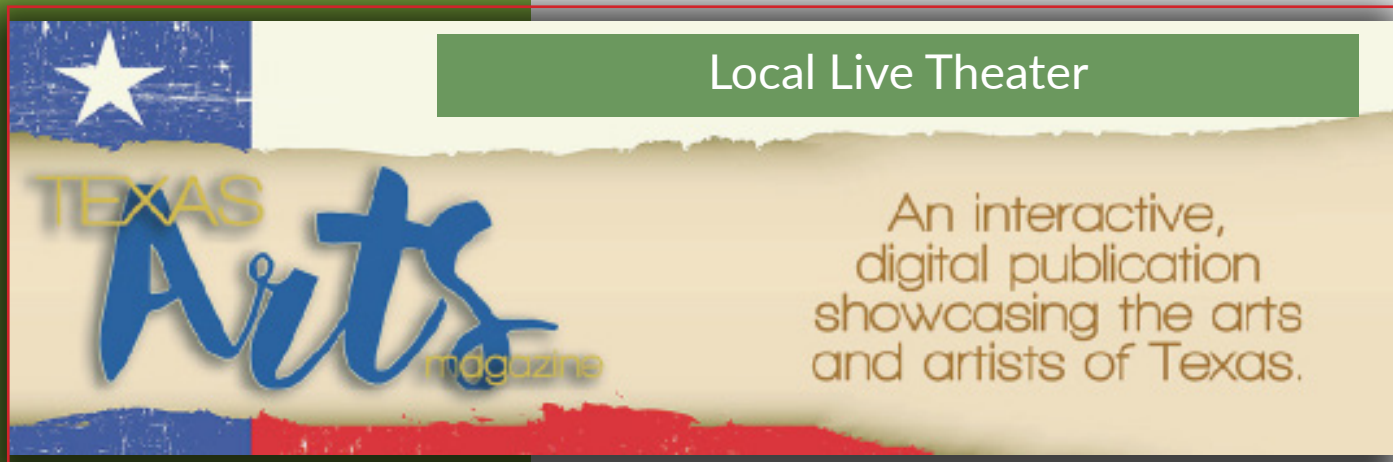
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In January 2025, the Dallas Museum of Art (DMA) will feature several notable exhibitions:.

When You See Me: Visibility in Contemporary Art/History

This exhibition explores themes of visibility and representation in contemporary art, featuring works by a diverse group of artists.

It is on display through April 13, 2025.

Backs in Fashion: Mangbetu Women's Egbe

This exhibition examines the cultural significance of the Mangbetu women's egbe hairstyle and its influence on fashion.

It is on view through August 3, 2025.

Tiffany Chung: Rise Into the Atmosphere

This exhibition features works by artist Tiffany Chung, exploring themes of migration, conflict, and urban transformation.

It is on display through September 3, 2025.

Encuentros: Latinx + Latin American Acquisitions

This exhibition showcases recent acquisitions of Latinx and Latin American art, highlighting the diversity and richness of these artistic traditions.

It runs through October 5, 2025.

Please note that exhibition dates are subject to change. For the most current information, visit the Dallas Museum of Art's official website.

<https://www.dma.org/>

Kimbell Art Museum

3333 Camp Bowie Boulevard
Fort Worth, Texas 76107-2792

Main: 817-332-8451

<https://kimbellart.org>

In January 2025, the Kimbell Art Museum in Fort Worth, Texas, is hosting the following special exhibition:

Dutch Art in a Global Age: Masterpieces from the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

This exhibition showcases Dutch art from the 17th century, highlighting the global influences and trade connections of the era.

It runs from November 10, 2024, through February 9, 2025.

In addition to the special exhibition, the Kimbell Art Museum offers a rich permanent collection featuring works from antiquity to the 20th century, including European masterpieces, as well as art from Asia, Africa, and the Ancient Americas.

For a complete schedule of events and exhibitions, please visit the Kimbell Art Museum's official calendar.

Please note that exhibition dates and details are subject to change. It's advisable to check the museum's official website for the most current information before planning your visit.

Modern Art Museum

of Fort Worth

3200 Darnell Street
Fort Worth, Texas 76107
1.866.824.5566

<https://www.themodern.org>

In January 2025, the Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth is featuring the following exhibitions:

**Jonah Freeman +
Justin Lowe: Sunset Corridor**

This immersive installation by artists Jonah Freeman and Justin Lowe explores a retrofuturistic alternate universe known as the San San Universe. The exhibition comprises six architectural zones and a cinema, each delving into narratives about technology, youth culture, and countercultural movements.

On view through January 5, 2025.

Diaries of Home

Featuring works by twelve multi-generational artists, this exhibition examines themes of family, community, and the concept of home. The artists challenge traditional perceptions of domestic and communal spaces, presenting visual narratives that range from personal reflections to broader societal examinations.

On view through February 2, 2025.

Museum of Fine Arts Houston

1001 Bissonnet
Houston, Texas 77005M
713.639.7300

<https://www.mfah.org>

In January 2025, the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston (MFAH), is hosting several notable exhibitions:

Living with the Gods: Art, Beliefs, and Peoples

Exploring 3,000 years of spiritual belief and practice, this expansive exhibition features more than 200 objects from the MFAH collections and exceptional loans, examining how humanity has expressed spirituality across cultures and time periods.

On view through January 20, 2025.

Grounded in Clay: The Spirit of Pueblo Pottery

This traveling exhibition highlights Pueblo voices and aesthetics, offering an understanding of Pueblo pots as vessels of community-based knowledge and personal experience.

On view through January 12, 2025.

Gauguin in the World

The MFAH is the only U.S. venue for this ambitious exhibition showcasing the work of French Post-Impressionist artist Paul Gauguin, exploring his global influences and artistic journey.

On view through February 16, 2025.

Picturing Nature: The Stuart Collection of 18th- and 19th-Century British Land- scapes and Beyond

Featuring over 70 works of art, this exhibition explores the evolution of landscape art in Britain, showcasing pieces by artists such as John Constable and J.M.W. Turner.

On view from January 12 to July 6, 2025.

Please note that exhibition dates and details are subject to change. For the most current information, visit the MFAH's official website.

San Antonio Museum of Art

200 West Jones Avenue
San Antonio, TX 78215
210.978.8100

<https://www.samuseum.org>

Lovers & Fighters: Prints by Latino Artists in the SAMA Col- lection

This exhibition highlights prints by Latino artists, featuring imagery related to love, power, and struggle, and showcases the influence of printmaking in Latino art history.

On view through April 20, 2025.

The Exquisite Art of Shibata Zeshin: Lacquerwares and Paintings

Discover the delicate and intricate works of Shibata Zeshin, a master of Japanese lacquerware and painting, renowned for his innovative techniques and artistry.

On view through April 27, 2025.

For the most current information on these exhibitions and related events, please visit the San Antonio Museum of Art's official website.

McNay Art Museum

6000 N New Braunfels Ave,
San Antonio, TX 78209
(210) 824-5368

<https://www.mcnayart.org>

In January 2025, the McNay Art Museum in San Antonio is showcasing several notable exhibitions:

Whitfield Lovell: Passages

This comprehensive exhibition features two immersive installations and approximately 30 works by contemporary artist Whitfield Lovell, known for his Conté crayon drawings based on vintage photographs of unidentified African Americans. The exhibition delves into themes of identity, memory, and African American history.

On view through January 19, 2025.

Women Artists of the Ballets

Russes: Designing the Legacy

Celebrating the contributions of female designers like Sonia Delaunay, Alexandra Exter, and Natalia Goncharova, this exhibition highlights their pivotal roles in Serge Diaghilev's Ballets Russes. It showcases designs and choreography that brought early 20th-century ballets to life.

On view through January 12, 2025.

Rasquachismo: 35 Years of a Chicano Sensibility

This exhibition examines the legacy of Tomás Ybarra-Frausto's pivotal 1989 essay celebrating the aesthetics of the working class and the underdog, showcasing works that embody the rasquachismo sensibility in Chicano art.

On view from December 19, 2024, through March 30, 2025.

Orly Genger: Stomping Ground

Austin-based artist Orly Genger activates the McNay Sculpture Garden with a sprawling work of art composed from brightly painted recycled lobster rope, creating an engaging outdoor installation.

On view through March 16, 2025.



Spotlight: San Antonio's K-12 Artists Embrace Ian Dawson

Since 2011, Spotlight has celebrated the remarkable achievements of student artists reflecting on one work in the McNay collection. This year, over 1,300 students from 37 San Antonio area schools created works of art in various media in response to Ian Dawson's

'Henri

and Henrietta.'

On view through April 27, 2025.

For more information on these exhibitions and related events, please visit the McNay Art Museum's official website. Museum are René Paul Barilleaux, Head of Curatorial Affairs, and Lauren Thompson, Curator of Exhibitions.

The Point Theater

120 Point Theatre Road, Ingram, Texas 78025

The Hill Country Arts Foundation (HCAF)/Point Theatre is located on the banks of the Guadalupe River off State Highway 39 in Ingram, Texas. HCAF provides a cultural atmosphere, including art classes and theatre for professionals and amateurs, plus special children's programs.

[See the 2024-theatre-season here](#)

Playhouse 2000

The Kathleen C. Cailloux City Center for the Performing Arts in beautiful downtown Kerrville, TX includes the 800 seat Cailloux Theater, the intimate VK Garage Theater black box, and the Kit Werlein Annex support facility. All facilities and programming are managed by Playhouse 2000, a production and community theater performance company with over 20 years history bringing great entertainment to the Hill Country. Playhouse 2000 is also proud to offer their own productions at the Cailloux City Center. We hope to see you soon!

[See the Playhouse 2000 season here](#)