

# Alpine, Texas

## The Hub of the Big Bend Area

### Four Days :: Four Directions



The community of Alpine Texas is only a half-hour drive each from Marfa, Fort Davis and Marathon. Located just off Highway 90 on the way to the Big Bend, Alpine provides a welcome stop for gas, hotels, food, all services and shopping.

Residents of this 5,000-foot elevation mountain community enjoy a climate and a way of life like no other.

Alpine offers over 400 hotel rooms, 20 restaurants, 7 R.V. camp grounds, 1 nine-hole public golf course, 8 gas stations, 2 grocery stores, and a downtown full of wonderful art galleries, specialty stores, museums and so much more.

- Low to moderate rainfall
- Generally cool summers
- Generally mild winters
- Rainfall primarily during the summer and early fall
- Cool evenings during all seasons
- Summary: Alpine enjoys a mild climate which is in contrast to its elevation of 4,845 feet.

***Come experience one of this nation's Last Frontiers!***



# Four Days :: Four Directions

## Suggested Itineraries

Day 1 :: Alpine.....4

Day 2 :: Marfa , The River Road, and Terlingua .....

Day 3 :: Fort Davis and McDonald Observatory .....

Day 4 :: Down South, Big Bend National Park  
and Marathon .....



[www.AlpineTexas.com](http://www.AlpineTexas.com)

## Day One :: Alpine

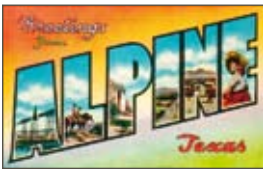
### Museum of the Big Bend

This first-class museum, located on the campus of Sul Ross State University, offers an excellent introduction to the cultural heritage and natural features of the Big Bend through its permanent displays and temporary installations. Browse the cactus garden on the front lawn for an up-close look at typical Chihuahuan Desert flora.



### Alpine's Murals

Stroll through the breezeway along side the Reata Restaurant, between the street and their patio, and marvel at the colorful mural, depicting scenes from the movie from which the restaurant takes its name, the motion picture "Giant." Walk down the street two blocks south and you'll see another fabulous mural by Stylee Read along the side of Kiowa Gallery. This mural displays many images of West Texas and Alpine, including one of Sul Ross' most famous alumni, Dan Blocker ("Hoss" on the 1960/1970s television series "Bonanza"). Round the corner and Alpine's Rangra Theater is decorated with images of John Wayne, Darth Vader and many other famous movie characters.



### Historic Alpine Walking / Windshield Tour

Park at the Amtrak railroad depot in the center of town and head out on foot, or take the tour in your vehicle. Many of Alpine's downtown buildings date back to the late 1800's. Some of the highlights of the tour include the Brewster County Courthouse (walk through its main hall to view old photographs of Alpine's early days), the Masonic Building, the Holland Hotel, and several old churches. Take the time to browse the art galleries and emporiums that now occupy many of Alpine's historic buildings. The

diversity of art and crafts to be found in Alpine's shops is as much a part of the local culture as is ranching and the nearby Mexican border. A copy of the historic tour and map is available at the Alpine Visitor's Center, 106 North 3rd Street. (432) 837-2326 [www.alpinetexas.com](http://www.alpinetexas.com)

## **Kokernot Field**

Kokernot Field is the result of a local rancher's dream. "If you build it, they will come" must have been the words ringing in his ears in the mid 1940's when the baseball diamond was built. An avid baseball fan, Herbert D. Kokernot spent more than a million dollars on the construction of the stadium, artfully modeled after the famous Wrigley Field in Chicago, only on a smaller scale. The field was host to the Alpine Cowboys minor league baseball team for a decade, through the mid-1950's. It is used today by the university and the local school system.



## **SRSU Rodeo**

Sul Ross State University is renowned as the birth place of the NIRA — National Intercollegiate Rodeo Association. For more information on the Rodeo Club and its activities, contact Sul Ross Campus Activities at (432) 837-8191.

## **Turner Range and Animal Science Center**

For rodeo and horse fans, this is the place. The RAS hosts a number of rodeos and horse shows throughout the year. Between events, one might find Sul Ross State University students and 4-H club members practicing in the arena at any given time, making a wonderful morning or afternoon attraction.



## Lunch at One of Alpine's Many Fine Restaurants

Your dining options in Alpine include a diverse range of menu choices, including: American, Mexican, TexMex, Italian, Seafood, Chinese, Cowboy Cuisine, and much more. View a list of Alpine restaurants on

the Alpine Visitors Bureau bulletin board at 106 North 3rd Street. (432) 837-2326 [www.alpinetexas.com](http://www.alpinetexas.com)

## Specialty Shops

Alpine has many unique shops and boutiques. Most of our specialty shops are located in the historic downtown area, with a few others scattered here and there. Choose from fine art, photography, antiques, gifts and souvenirs, books and maps, rocks and gems, arts and crafts, and a whole lot more.



## Alpine Country Club Golf Course

Nestled next to Kokernot Park, this 9-hole course is very popular with both residents and visitors. **The course is open to the public. (IS THIS TRUE?)**

## View the Marfa Mystery Lights Video

West of town on Highway 90, the Apache Trading Post offers a free viewing of an 8-minute documentary about the Marfa Mystery Lights. Find out what experts think and what to look for before heading out at night to see the lights for yourself.

Marfa Lights Photo

## Area Geology

Rock hounds will delight viewing the many rocks of the area at the museum at Antelope Lodge. There you can learn about the many geological places that offer rare and beautiful rocks for your hunting enjoyment.

## As the Night Winds Down...

If you like the nightlife, you'll find plenty of live music, dancing, pool tables, darts, and dominoes at our friendly beer and wine bars in Alpine. Alpine is semi-dry. Most places allow BYO liquor and will sell set-ups, but it's a good idea to ask first.



## Performing Arts and Live Entertainment

Alpine offers a variety of stage performances throughout the year by our two local theatre groups: the Theatre of the Big Bend and the Big Bend Players. If you are in Alpine during the summer months, enjoy the outdoor theatre during our cool high desert evenings. Live music can be heard everywhere in Alpine, with a variety of genres represented. Weekends at the Railroad Blues, you'll find honky-tonk, tejano, blues, rock and many others. Ask the front desk of your hotel for a copy of the weekly entertainment guide.

Alpine feels like a long way from everywhere, which is one of the many reasons we like it. The varied and unusual things Alpine has to offer, we hope you enjoy our town as much as we do.

## Day Two :: Marfa, the River Road, and Terlingua



Heading west out of Alpine, you will drive through the beautiful Paisano Pass. The pass is one of the most scenic drives near Alpine with its soaring peaks, colorful canyons and rural ranches. The Paisano Baptist Encampment chose this beautiful location for their retreats, building their simple structures at the base of

Paisano Peak. The Union Pacific Railroad runs through the pass and when the trains are passing just to the north of the highway, one gets a feeling of the early days of the area's development with the advent of the railroads over 100 years ago.

The next 15 miles of the drive take you onto the Marfa Plateau. Look for antelope on the prairies that stretch for miles in all directions. The Marfa Lights Viewing Center is located just a few miles out of Paisano Pass, on the left.



### The Chinati Foundation

Located south of Marfa off Highway 67, The Chinati Foundation offers guided tours only in two parts each day — at 10:00 AM and 2:00 PM, with time in between for lunch. The tours are offered (as of the time of this writing) every Wednesday through Sunday. The morning tour explores the Donald Judd installations located in the large hangar-like storage buildings of what was once an old military base, Fort D.A. Russell. Then in the afternoon, the tour moves on to explore additional permanent and temporary exhibits by other minimalist artists and sculptors located on the old military base. For more detailed information, visit the Chinati Foundation web site at [www.chinati.org](http://www.chinati.org). 432.729.4362



## Presidio County Courthouse

Marfa offers a lot to see. The beautifully restored Presidio County Courthouse stands proudly at the center of town, its central dome rising above the rest of the quaint ranching community. If you are doing this itinerary on a weekday (non-holiday), you will be able to venture into the historic



courthouse, open till 5 PM. Stairs lead up 4½ floors (or you can take an elevator to the third floor and stairs the rest of the way) to a circular lookout room lined with windows all around. The views from up there are spectacular, with the community of Marfa spread out in every direction and the surrounding landscape going on forever. From this vantage point, you can see the Davis Mountains to the north, the Del Norte Mountains to the east and the Chinati Mountains to the southwest.

## Downtown Marfa

Take a stroll down main street and browse the specialty shops and galleries, visit the Marfa Book Store for cappuccino or a glass of wine, and see the “Giant” movie exhibit at the historic Paisano Hotel, where Elizabeth Taylor, Rock Hudson and James Dean stayed during the filming of the classic movie. Or venture over to the Marfa and Presidio County Museum for a

step back in time with several rooms of exhibits to contemplate (Note: Arrive before 5 PM).



During the longer days of summer, take the time to drive down the side streets and into the residential areas where you'll find that many of the older adobe homes have been nicely restored, like a mini-Santa Fe.

Your dining options in Marfa are sure to please even the most critical palate. For a list of dining choices and more information about Marfa, visit the **Marfa Chamber of Commerce at 207 N. Highland Avenue - in the Paisano Hotel. (432) 729-4942 [www.marfacc.com](http://www.marfacc.com)**

## Shafter Ghost Town

The ghost town of Shafter is approximately twenty miles north of Presidio on Highway 67. Shafter was once a booming silver mining town, until it died out in the 1940's. A few people live in the old structures of this historic village, their homes well adorned with flower gardens and keeping with the historic feel of the town. Take some time to get out and walk through the streets of Shafter, and take in the spirit of its history. The Shafter Memorial site, a large display of photographs and documents of Shafter's history, is located about a half mile off Highway 67 to the east (follow the signs). You will need to drive across Cibolo Creek, usually just a few inches deep where it passes over the road, to get to the memorial, which is adjacent to the Shafter cemetery.



## Presidio

Presidio is on the Rio Grande, FM 170, and State Highway 67, about twenty miles south of Shafter in southern Presidio County. The surrounding area is the oldest continuously cultivated area in the United States. Farmers have lived at Presidio since 1500 B.C. By 1400 A.D. the area Indians lived in small, close-together settlements, which the Spaniards later called pueblos.

## The River Road (FM 170)

Heading to Lajitas, you begin your tour of the River Road, along the southern boundary of Big Bend Ranch State Park. The next thirty miles or so will take you through some of the most beautiful scenery in North America — soaring mountain peaks, colorful volcanic ash (tuff) formations, narrow canyons, and the flood plain of the Rio Grande River. Along with the Scenic Loop around Fort Davis, the River Road is considered one of the top ten scenic highways in the nation.



## Fort Leaton

Fort Leaton is part of the Texas Parks and Wildlife system. This historic landmark was built in 1848 by Ben Leaton as a fortified trading post. Leaton dominated the border trade with the Apache and Comanche Indians until his death in 1851. Fort Leaton is open for day-use only. The complex includes historic ruins, restored rooms and interpretive exhibits of the cultural, natural and archeological history of the area, dating back to the 15th century. Fort Leaton also serves as the western entrance to the Big Bend Ranch State Park. For more information, contact Fort Leaton at (432) 229-3416.

## Redford

Just twelve miles east of Fort Leaton, the tiny community of Redford presents a stark contrast to the rocky, mountainous scenery of the next thirty miles along the River Road. Redford lies in the floodplain of the Rio Grande River, and its rich soil makes it an excellent place for farming. Green fields, spread out in vast acreage along the river, seem almost out of place here. There's no need to stop, but do enjoy its sense of serenity as you drive through.

## The Big Hill on the Rio Grande

---

About 15 miles from Redford, you will begin your approach of what is known locally as “Big Hill.” Big Hill is just what its name implies. It is a very steep and long, uphill grade that reaches a summit of several hundred feet above the river, not suitable for large trailers and extremely heavy loads. You will want to use low gear both on the ascent and descent.



At the summit of Big Hill, there is a place on the river’s side of the road (on the right on this route) where you can park. Use caution when slowing down to park as it is difficult to see over the hill for oncoming traffic. But if you do stop, it is well worth it. Take the short foot trail from the pullout to a point just a hundred feet or so from the road, where you can truly get the feeling of the intensity and depth of this massive canyon cut by the river below.

Again, use caution when driving back onto the road. And be sure to stay in low gear on your descent from Big Hill.

## Contrabando Movie Set


---

At approximately 25 miles into the drive, you will come to the Contrabando Movie Set. This small set, situated on the sloping river bank amidst the multi-colored hues of the surrounding landscape, is a splendid representation of life as it was during the frontier days of the Wild West along the Mexican border. The set includes several adobe buildings, a chapel, a cantina, and a corral. The films made here include 1999’s “The Journeyman” and 1995’s “Dead Man’s Walk” and “Streets of Laredo.”

## Lajitas

---

Imagine a place where the Comanche Indians once roamed, Pancho Villa led raids across the Rio Grande, cowboys sat around an open campfire, and miners drank whisky at the Trading Post; all among dramatic Chisos



mountain vistas and the borderland majesty of the Rio Grande River. Now a resort community, Lajitas offers contemporary lodging and dining — and the only 19-hole international golf course (open to the public).

## **Barton Warnock Nature Center**

---

Barton Warnock Environmental Education Center serves as the eastern entrance gateway to Big Bend Ranch State Park and interprets 570 million years of geological history and the five biological landscapes of the Chihuahuan Desert, a region better known to most West Texas travelers as the Big Bend. The Center presents an archeological, historical, and natural history profile of the Big Bend region. It houses a book store and gift shop. Backpacking, camping (no hookups), and lodging is available at Big Bend Ranch State Park. Permits for backpacking and camping, at Big Bend Ranch, can be obtained at the Barton Warnock or Fort Leaton State Historic Site headquarters. (432) 424-3327

## **Terlingua**

---

The Terlingua Ghosttown is the site of the mercury mining community of the early 1900's. Like neighboring Study Butte, the town went bust when the mercury mines closed. Visit the Terlingua Trading Company for unique gifts and handcrafted items. You can also pick up a brochure for a self-guided tour to learn more about this historic community.



Terlingua Photo

Shopping, dining, and outdoor recreation options abound in the Terlingua area. Choices include: American, Mexican, TexMex, Italian, Seafood, Thai, and much more. For a list of Terlingua shopping and dining, visit the Big Bend Chamber of Commerce at Hwy 170 @ Terlingua Creek. (432) 371-2427 [www.bigbendchamber.org](http://www.bigbendchamber.org)

## Day Three :: Fort Davis and McDonald Observatory

Get started with a cup of coffee or tea and breakfast at one of Alpine's eateries. You can find authentic breakfast burritos, a hearty plate of eggs and bacon or a wonderful tasty homemade pastry to get you going. Then head north from Alpine on Highway 118.



### Chihuahuan Desert Nature Center

The Chihuahuan Desert Nature Center and Botanical Gardens is located on 507-acres, about twenty miles north of Alpine on Highway 118. The Center is in a marvelous setting, with views of Mt. Livermore to the north and Blue Mountain to the southwest. "The mission of the Chihuahuan Desert Research Institute is to promote public awareness, appreciation, and concern for the natural diversity of the Chihuahuan Desert through research and education programs." Known to locals as



CDRI, the Center is home to a Visitor's Center, the Leapin' Lizard Gift Shop, an arboretum, and the cactus and succulent greenhouse with over 200 species of Chihuahuan Desert cacti. For those who enjoy hiking, the CDRI offers two, moderately strenuous hikes: the Modesta Canyon Trail, a one-hour hike down a protected canyon to Modesta Canyon Springs, and the Clayton's Overlook hike with spectacular views of the surrounding territory. The CDRI is open Monday through Saturday 9 AM to 5 PM. (432) 364-2499 [www.cdri.org](http://www.cdri.org)

### Fort Davis

Venture out among the community and view 23 historic sites. At just 1½ miles long, this is a journey that starts and ends in the town square. The tour encompasses the longest section of the



unpaved Overland-Butterfield mail route.

Fort Davs has several unique specialty shops, galleries and restaurants housed in its historic buildings, making it a pleasant experience for both history buffs, shoppers and those with an appetite. For more information, visit the Fort Davis Chamber of Commerce, #4 Memorial Square (Across the street from the Courthouse behind the Fort Davis State Bank.) 432-426-3015 [www.fortdavis.com](http://www.fortdavis.com)

## **Fort Davis National Historic Site**

Just north of downtown Fort Davis on Highway 118 at the foot of Sleeping Lion Mountain and Hospital Canyon, Fort Davis is considered perhaps the best preserved of all the 19th century frontier forts and one of the best preserved “Buffalo Soldier” forts in the west. The site is well maintained and thoughtfully restored with interpretive and historical displays, an excellent book shop and a museum. Partially restored and fully restored buildings are scattered throughout the 474 acre grounds. Some have period furnishings. Military hobbyists and historians will surely enjoy this glimpse of military frontier life.



## **Scenic Loop Drive**

Along with the River Road along the Rio Grande River, the Scenic Loup is considered one of the top ten scenic highways in the nation. Seventy-five miles long, the drive leaves Fort Davis on Highway 118, proceeds up Limpia Canyon past Mounts Locke and Fowlkes and the McDonald Observatory and then into Madera Canyon and a quiet, pine-shaded picnic area. After a left turn on Texas 166, the road passes Mount Livermore and Sawtooth Mountain, then gradually descends past a prominent ridge lined with wind generators toward the southeast side

of the mountains, with broad views to the Sierra Viejo Mountains along the Rio Grande to the south. As you approach Fort Davis again on Texas 166, the Puertacita Mountains and Miter Peak are straight ahead. Highest elevation on the Loop is about 6,700 feet, making it the highest public highway in Texas. For a detailed narrative on the Loop, which takes about 1.5 hours to drive, ask for the Fort Davis Texas Visitor's Guide at the Fort Davis Chamber of Commerce, #4 Memorial Square (Across the street from the Courthouse behind the Fort Davis State Bank.) 432-426-3015 [www.fortdavis.com](http://www.fortdavis.com)

This part of the Southwest is where the domain of American pioneers, Ranchers, Cowboys, Mexicans, Buffalo Soldiers, the Mescalero Apache and the Comanche overlapped.

## McDonald Observatory

When the three large domes of the McDonald Observatory appear on a mountain ridge in the distance, you know you're almost there. The observatory's three largest instruments are the 362" Hobby-Eberly telescope on 6,600-foot Mount Fowlkes, and the 107" Harlan J. Smith and 82" Otto Struve telescopes located on 6,800-foot Mount Locke. The observatory is located just 17 miles north of Fort Davis on Texas Highway 118.



### Daytime programs include:

Self Guided Tours of our largest telescope, the 362" Hobby-Eberly Telescope, are available at no charge from 10:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M. daily.

Explore the "Decoding Starlight" Exhibit Hall at the Visitors Center and enjoy various astronomical presentations in our multimedia theater.

See our nearest star, the Sun, from the comfort of our multimedia theater during our Solar Viewing program. View sunspots, flares, and prominences safely as they happen live. In the event of cloudy conditions, we will provide video of the above, taken with our telescopes.

**Join our Guided Tour** for an up-close look at large research telescopes at McDonald Observatory. The 90-minute tours are led by knowledgeable guides who will give you insight into the workings of a professional scientific research facility. A portion of the tour takes place outside, so please dress appropriately. Even during summer, wind at the summit can make a warm day seem unpleasantly cool.

### **Star Parties:**

Enjoy a tour of the constellations and view the moon, planets, stars, galaxies, and other objects through large telescopes at our Visitors Center Public Observatory. The program is fun for the entire family, and is open to everyone.



For more information about all programs and tours, contact the observatory at (432) 426-3640. [www.mcdonaldobservatory.org](http://www.mcdonaldobservatory.org)

---

If you stopped at McDonald Observatory on your trip around the Scenic Loop, continue the Scenic Loop from here for your return trip to Alpine.

## **Fort Davis and McDonald Observatory Photo Collage**

## Day Four :: Down South, Big Bend National Park, and Marathon



Driving out of Alpine on Highway 118 South, the road passes through high desert ranch lands for the first five miles or so. At approximately six miles there is a steep S-curve climb (first to the left, then to the right, then to the left again) around what local residents call Big Hill (elevation

approximately 5,000 feet). There is a wide roadside pullout on the right near the summit where you can park to take in a spectacular view of the Alpine Valley (below) spread out against the backdrop of the Davis Mountains. From Big Hill, the next twenty miles of the drive takes you through the rolling hills and mountain peaks of the Calamity Creek area. The landscape is a mix of juniper trees, desert cacti, boulders, volcanic outcroppings, and canyons lined with cottonwood trees. A prominent feature of the drive is Cathedral Mountain, which can be seen to the right about ten miles south of Big Hill. The last few miles of this segment of the drive winds around and down, following Calamity Creek as it approaches the massive Elephant Mountain, which marks the point where the road enters into a vast, ancient sea bed.

### **Ancient Sea Bed (Santiago Peak and Nine Point Mesa)**



Having descended some 2,000 feet from Big Hill to Elephant Mountain, the road enters into a sprawling desert landscape surrounded by solitary peaks and long, flat mesas on its horizons. Millions of years ago, this area was a shallow sea teeming with life. Fossils of ancient crustaceans, fish and other aquatic species are common in the rock beds throughout the area. One of the first prominent features of the landscape is Santiago Peak (at 6521' elevation) standing like a sentinel over the valley, seen far to the left as you enter the sea bed. In the 1940s, timeshare lots were sold on the flat summit of Santiago Peak. No development occurred, and it is now on private

property. Just imagine having a house up there! Further ahead to the south of Santiago Peak is Nine Point Mesa, about twenty miles ahead and just to the east of the highway. From a vantage point about 10-12 miles into the sea bed, one is offered their first glimpse of the Chisos Mountains in Big Bend National Park rising from behind the left flank of Nine Point Mesa like a dark, jagged cloud. Further on, as you pass along the west side of Nine Point Mesa with the Christmas Mountains dead ahead, a full view of the Chisos Mountains range appears to the left in the distance, still some forty miles away as the crow flies.



## **Christmas Mountains (Terlingua Ranch to Study Butte)**

---

The Christmas Mountains are a small volcanic range of jagged peaks and domed-shaped mountain tops. Their color is a deep reddish-brown, a stark contrast to the sun-

bleached desert floor of the ancient sea bed. The names of some of the mountains are just as colorful: Easter Egg Mountain, Packsaddle Mountain and Agua Fria Mountain.

Soon the road climbs far out of the valley, once again climbing a steep hill, and enters into a moon-like landscape littered with volcanic boulders and lined with ocotillos (a plant that resembles a bunch of stalks gathered at the base and fanning out at the top). About 7 miles from the steep hill is an oddly shaped peak that has a flat face on its south side with thousands of vertical lines carved into it. This peak was once part of the sea bed. An uplift on the north side shifted this small piece of sea bed up and onto its side, leaving it at a 90-degree angle to the rest of the landscape.

## **Study Butte**

---

Study Butte, like Terlingua, was built around mercury mining in the early 1900's; and like Terlingua, it went bust when the mercury mines closed. In

the last quarter of the 20th century, Study Butte began to grow again, ever so slowly, with the increase in tourists visiting nearby Big Bend National Park.

Study Butte offers dining opportunities, convenience stores, specialty shops, and outdoor recreation opportunities, along with a glimpse into the past. For more information, visit the Big Bend Chamber of Commerce at Hwy 170 @ Terlingua Creek. (432) 371-2427 [www.bigbendchamber.org](http://www.bigbendchamber.org)



\*NOTE: Make sure you fill up in Study Butte as there are no gas stations until Marathon.

## Big Bend National Park :: Maverick Badlands

The west entrance to the park is just a couple miles past Study Butte on Highway 118. The landscape along this section of road, for the first few miles, is that of multi-colored, earth-toned valleys and oddly shaped rock figures. A desolate landscape, yet, somehow inviting.

Further on, the painted desert fades away and the landscape is engulfed in a sea of ocotillo plants which create a magnificent display in late April and early May with their fiery red blooms. Near the last couple of miles of this section, the road rises over a hill, offering a magnificent view of the Chisos Mountains. The wide, V-shaped opening in the mountains is called the Window, almost perfectly framing the flat-topped Casa Grande.



Just a couple of miles on, as the road winds down and into the narrow valley below the mountains, is the junction of the Ross Maxwell Scenic

Drive, one of the most spectacular drives in the park.

## Big Bend National Park :: Ross Maxwell Scenic Drive (Spur Road)

There is a lot to see along this drive. The terrain changes dramatically during the entire 30 miles, from the higher, foothills of the Chisos Mountains, to a vast desert plain, to the greenbelt along the Rio Grande River. From deep canyons carved by the passing of time and water, to rugged cliffs and peaks, to volcanic outcroppings and massive ash deposits, to the lush vegetation lining the banks of the river, to the 1,500-foot shear walls of Santa Elena Canyon. Also along the drive are the ruins of several ranching enterprises and border communities.

There are roadside exhibit signs and pullouts for many of the points of interests. Some of the best include:

**Blue Creek Ranch Overlook** — the ruins of the foreman's house are nestled in the deep, narrow canyon along the Blue Creek (8 miles)



**Sotol Vista** — spectacular views of the desert some 2,000 feet below (just past Blue Creek Ranch)



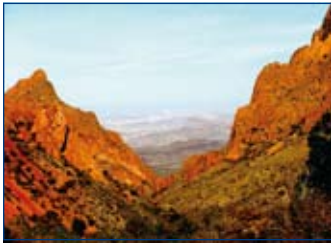
**Mule Ears Peaks Viewpoint** — the US Air Force used to train pilots by having them fly between the peaks (15 miles)

**Tuff Canyon and Cerro Castellan** — a narrow canyon walled with volcanic ash cut by the Blue Creek sits at the base of the colorful Cerro Castellan Peak (19.5 miles)



**Castolon Village** — historic buildings, grocery store and restrooms (22 miles)

**Santa Elena Canyon Overlook** — where the Rio Grande River cuts a mighty gorge between the USA and Mexico (30 miles). To access the overlook, there is a parking lot at the end of the road with a foot trail that leads down to Terlingua Creek. Cross the creek and climb the footpath to the overlook.



## **Big Bend National Park :: Chisos Basin**

---

Ringed by massive cliffs and superlative views, the Chisos Basin is located in the center of Big Bend NP. Here, you will find the only restaurant and lodging within the entire park. A National Park Service visitor center and a camper's store are also located here. A campground is located a short distance from the Basin developed area.

## **Big Bend National Park :: Panther Junction (Park Headquarters)**

Panther Junction roughly marks the center of the park. The visitors center at park headquarters provides free information about the park. It also houses interpretive exhibits about the park's geology, flora and fauna, and a giant relief map of the entire park. The bookstore offers an abundance of reference material, maps, calendars and postcards. Surrounding the headquarters building is a short, self-guided nature walk, displaying many of the park's native plant species

## **Marathon Parkway (BBNP to Marathon)**

---

The drive north from Big Bend National Park to Marathon offers pleasant scenery and a relatively flat, straight road ahead. The surrounding lands are

those of vast ranches, many remaining in the same family for over 100 years. The highway follows the path of a narrow valley of rugged, unforgiving desert terrain lined with beautiful mesas and isolated mountain peaks.



## Historic Marathon

Marathon, like Alpine and Marfa, developed with the coming of the railroad in the late 1800's; and like its sister towns along Highway 90, its major economic factor in those early days was the ranching industry. Since the establishment of Big Bend National Park,

Marathon has capitalized on its tourism resources.

Marathon has several unique specialty shops, galleries and restaurants housed in its historic buildings, making it a pleasant experience for both history buffs, shoppers and those with an appetite. Visit the Marfa Chamber of Commerce inside of Front Street Books, 105 West Highway 90. (432) 386 4516 [www.marathontexas.net](http://www.marathontexas.net)



## Glass Mountains (Marathon to Alpine)

Highway 90 passes through the Glass Mountains during its 30 mile stretch between Marathon and Alpine. The highway follows the route of the railroad. Trains moving along the tracks offering a glimpse into the historical roots of both Alpine and Marathon. The Glass Mountains is one of the dozen mountain ranges located in the Big Bend area — a perfect backdrop for both Alpine and Marathon.



Copyright ©2008  
Alpine Convention & Visitors Bureau /  
Chamber of Commerce  
[www.AlpineTexas.com](http://www.AlpineTexas.com)

