

ABSOLUTELY Mamma

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MODEL MAMA

Natalia Vodianova's new business venture

FUN FOOD

Angellica Bell's new cookbook

GET OUTSIDE
NON-PLASTIC
OUTDOOR TOYS

Mother MILK

BREASTFEEDING
TIPS AND ADVICE

Green FUTURE

Helen Skelton on
being more eco

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GREETINGS FROM



ROAD TRIPPING

Zoey Goto and her husband took their two children, aged 7 and 2, on a mini road trip through the lone star state

“We were instantly won over by the city’s hip but family-friendly atmosphere, and seriously good food scene”

South Congress area, then sampled ‘New School Barbeque’ and fed chickens at the LeRoy & Lewis food truck, before mingling with locals at Loro, a relaxed and stylish Asian smokehouse, where the kids played out on the patio, lit by strings of lights. Austin is also home to a fantastic interactive children’s museum called the Thinkery, and dinosaur-fans will love hunting for T-Rex in the forest at the Dinosaur Park.

Following a week of soaking up the culture and cuisine of Austin, we hit the road and drove two hours to Bandera, a frontier town made up of a couple of streets that could double as the set of a Western movie. Known as the ‘Cowboy Capital of the World’, Bandera is the place to visit to sample the wrangler lifestyle at a dude ranch. We pitched up our wagon and spent a few unforgettable days at the Flying L resort, a picturesque ranch that’s home to a stable of seasoned horses, fields of wild deer and a wonderfully eccentric Wild West themed water park. In the mornings, my eldest daughter and I rode horses along the local scenic trails, through streams filled with catfish and past stunning waterfalls.

A stay at the Flying L ranch works well for kids of all ages, as six years and upwards can





“It was a wonderfully wholesome couple of days and my two little cowpokes were reluctant to hang up their spurs and hit the road again”

trail ride, there are pony rides for children from age 3, plus plenty of animal petting opportunities for toddlers. As evening fell, our nightly entertainment at the ranch included hayrides and feeding the deer, as well as cowboy songs and s'mores around the campfire, led by the charismatic Cowboy Buck.

Venturing into Bandera town, we were transported back to a bygone era. Sitting at the bar in the nostalgic general store, we



cooled down with drinks from the original 1950s soda fountain, before strolling over to the 11th Street Cowboy Bar to join their weekly bring-your-own steak night, and attempted to dance the Texas Two-Step to live country music. It was a wonderfully wholesome couple of days and my two little cowpokes were reluctant to hang up their spurs and hit the road again.

Driving an hour down towards the Mexican border, we arrived in San Antonio and were greeted with streets lined with a rainbow of fluttering paper bunting and ribbons, as the city prepared for its fiesta parade. After touring the local attractions, including the historic Alamo fortress, and Morgan's Wonderland, a wonderfully gentle and inclusive theme park where even babies can join the rides, we settled into our family villa at La Cantera, rounding off our trip with a few days of tasty Mexican cuisine and tranquillity.

In many ways our Texas road trip felt like three mini-breaks rolled into one, as each destination offered its own distinctive experience – from Austin's urban sophistication and San Antonio's Latino culture, to – our personal favourite – living the cowboy dream in Bandera. As the saying goes, everything is bigger in Texas – and that definitely includes family holidays y'all! ☺

WHERE TO STAY

AUSTIN

Hyatt Regency Austin

● Situated right next to Austin's famous Congress Avenue Bridge, home to 1.5 million bats that swoop into the sky at sunset. The hotel goes out of its way to make families feel welcome, with baby's toiletries, an extensive kid's food menu and mocktail list, super friendly staff and an outdoor pool overlooking the pretty Lady Bird Lake.
hyatt.com

SAN ANTONIO

La Cantera Resort

● Escape the bustle of San Antonio by staying at this beautiful hilltop resort in Texas Hill Country, just 30 minutes from the centre. The resort is a great option for families, with five swimming pools, a kid's club, plus a fantastic naturalists program, where children learn about the local wildlife through adventure hikes and craft activities. For a dose of R&R, also there's a blissful day spa onsite. And relax!
lacanteraresort.com

BANDERA

Flying L Ranch Resort

● This iconic dude ranch opened up in the late 1940s and has since graced the pages of Life magazine and been featured in the cult television show The Cisco Kid. There's plenty to keep families occupied, with nightly Western-themed family entertainment throughout the year and in high season a weekly Chuck Wagon Dinner Show, featuring a Texas BBQ, Country Western band, gunslinger show and roping lessons for the children.
flyingl.com

TEXAS ROAD TRIP ESSENTIALS

Hertz American Road Trip Planner

● A great resource for researching family friendly routes and activities throughout the United States.

Clothing for all weather

● Locals will tell you that "If you don't like the weather in Texas, wait five minutes" – meaning it can be blazing sunshine one minute and dramatic thunder storms the next. Pack sunscreen and hats, wellies and macs accordingly.

Activity books for in-car entertainment

● To fully embrace the Texan lifestyle, 'How to be a Cowboy' by Alice Lickens has cool Western stickers and a talk-like-a-cowboy guide. Yee-haw!