THE
San Antonio
RIVER WALK

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The Historic San Antonio River Walk

The historic downtown San Antonio River Walk is lined with restaurants, shops, hotels and more. It connects major tourist destinations in the downtown area including The Alamo, Shops at Rivercenter, Arneson River Theatre and La Villita.

Local architect, Robert Harvey Harold Hugman, first pitched his River Walk plan in 1929. In 1938, funding from the Works Projects Administration and a local bond allowed for construction to start which led to the River Walk’s completion in 1941. Pedestrian traffic was assured by two new hotels and an extension connecting the River Walk to the grounds of HemisFair ’68, San Antonio’s World’s Fair. Today, the San Antonio River Walk is a top tourist destination in the State of Texas. For more information about the origins of the San Antonio River Walk, scan the QR Code below or visit www.hugmantour.com.

For more information about the restaurants, shops and hotels found along the world-renowned San Antonio River Walk and other points of interest throughout the San Antonio area, please scan the QR Code or go to the Visit San Antonio website at www.visitsanantonio.com.
North of downtown, the Museum Reach section of the San Antonio River Walk links several downtown historic, commercial and cultural institutions all along the beautiful San Antonio River, including the VFW Post 76, which is the oldest VFW Post in Texas, the San Antonio Museum of Art, Pearl, the Witte Museum, Brackenridge Park and the San Antonio Zoo. This section of the River Walk includes roughly 5 miles of pedestrian pathways, public art and manicured landscaping containing over 70,000 plants.

San Antonio’s famous river barges are able to travel between downtown and Pearl through the use of the Museum Reach Lock and Dam complex at Brooklyn Ave., which raises and lowers barges approximately 9 feet. Traveling north from downtown, barge traffic ends at Pearl; however, a hike and bike trail continues into Brackenridge Park and towards the headwaters of the San Antonio River.
The Mission Reach section of the San Antonio River Walk is an area of urban ecosystem restoration that is increasing the quality, quantity and diversity of plants and animals along nine miles of the San Antonio River just south of the city’s downtown. The habitat improvements allow fishermen, birdwatchers and other nature enthusiasts more opportunities to enjoy wildlife in an urban area. Nearly 280 different species of native herbaceous and woody vegetation have been documented along the Mission Reach since 2013, and to date, 153 total bird species have been observed using the restored habitat.

The Mission Reach has over 16 miles of trail along the river for pedestrians and bicyclists to enjoy and a paddling trail is available for canoes and kayaks. Mission Portals welcome cyclists, joggers and walkers from the trail system to the historic Spanish Colonial Missions, which are recognized as World Heritage Sites.
The San Antonio River Walk is part of the larger San Antonio River Watershed. The San Antonio River flows 240 miles through Bexar, Wilson, Karnes, Goliad and Refugio counties, converging with the Guadalupe River before finally flowing into the San Antonio Bay on the Gulf of Mexico. The San Antonio River Watershed contains over 8,800 miles of streams, including major tributaries: Medina River, Leon Creek, Salado Creek and Cibolo Creek. For more information about the San Antonio River, scan the QR Code or visit www.sara-tx.org.
Bicycling is a wonderful way to experience the River Walk. For those visitors to the River Walk who do not have their own bicycle, there are numerous San Antonio B-cycle Stations along the River Walk for quick and easy bicycle rental. However, please note that bicycling is not allowed along the river in the historic downtown section due to the narrow sidewalks of the original River Walk and heavy pedestrian traffic in this area.

For more information about San Antonio B-cycle, scan the QR Code or visit https://sanantonio.bcycle.com/.

Paddling a canoe or kayak along the Mission Reach is a wonderful way to experience the river. To learn about paddling options and to see the list of approved paddling vendors, scan the QR Code or visit www.sara-tx.org/river-recreation/paddling-trails.

For more information about special events taking place along the historic downtown section of the River Walk, please visit the Paseo del Rio Association by scanning the QR Code or visiting www.thesanantonioriverwalk.com.

The River Walk is home to numerous works of public art funded by the San Antonio River Foundation. The Museum Reach contains 11 works of public art created by local, national and internationally known artists. The Mission Reach has been enhanced by adding beautiful and inspiring public art at the Mission Portals, pedestrian bridges, art benches and the development of Confluence Park. To learn more about the San Antonio River Foundation, scan the QR Code or visit www.sariverfoundation.org.
The first documented arrival of Spanish explorers at the river occurred on June 13, 1691, when members of a Spanish expedition named the waterway in honor of Saint Anthony. Throughout the 1700s, development of what is now the City of San Antonio occurred alongside five Spanish Colonial missions established near the river – Mission San Antonio de Valero (The Alamo), Mission Nuestra Señora de la Purísima Concepción de Acuña (Mission Concepción), Mission San José y San Miguel de Aguayo (Mission San José), Mission San Juan Capistrano (Mission San Juan) and Mission San Francisco de la Espada (Mission Espada). Today, these five missions, and the remaining acequia system and nearby farms and ranches, represent the largest concentration of Spanish Colonial missions in North America.

In 2015, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) inscribed the San Antonio Missions as a World Heritage Site thus recognizing their worldwide significance. Both the historical and cultural importance of the San Antonio River as well as the Mission Reach Ecosystem Restoration and Recreation Project were mentioned in the material supporting the World Heritage Status nomination. The adopted UNESCO Statement of Outstanding Universal Value acknowledges the five missions were selected based on their geographical and functional relationship in the San Antonio River Basin and that the San Antonio River continues to play an important role in connecting the missions and providing an essential buffer to help ensure the integrity of the San Antonio Missions World Heritage Site. For more information about the San Antonio Missions World Heritage Sites, scan the QR Code or visit www.worldheritagesa.com.

When recreating along the hike and bike trail of the Mission Reach section of the San Antonio River Walk, visitors can use the “Mission Portals” to connect from the river to four of San Antonio’s World Heritage Mission Sites – Mission Concepción, Mission San José, Mission San Juan and Mission Espada. These connections feature historic and artistic interpretations of the story of the missions and highlight their social and cultural importance to the area. For more information about the San Antonio Missions National Historical Park, scan the QR Code or visit www.nps.gov/saan.

It is important to remember that the San Antonio River, including the River Walk, is part of the San Antonio River Watershed and serves as an important habitat corridor that supports numerous native plants, migratory birds and other wildlife. The San Antonio River Basin Field Guide was created by the San Antonio River Authority to serve as a resource to better understand the plant and animal life within the San Antonio River Watershed. To view the San Antonio River Basin Field Guide, scan the QR Code or visit: www.sara-tx.org/environmental-science/basin-field-guide/.

Please help keep the San Antonio River enjoyable for everyone by properly disposing of recycling and litter. Be a responsible pet owner and please pick up after your pet. And please, do not feed the wildlife. Being so close to the river means that everything left behind goes straight into the river during a rain event. Together, we can all help keep the San Antonio River clean, safe and enjoyable.
• Use your smart phone to scan QR codes along the way for information about that particular location

• Open a “barcode scanner” application on your smartphone (these applications are generally free and available for all smartphone platforms)

• Point your phone’s camera at the code and click to scan

• Historical markers, plaques and interpretive signs help you uncover the city’s past

• Informational signage points you in the right direction

• Ambassador Amigos, knowledgeable folks sporting brightly colored shirts and straw hats, can provide assistance as you explore