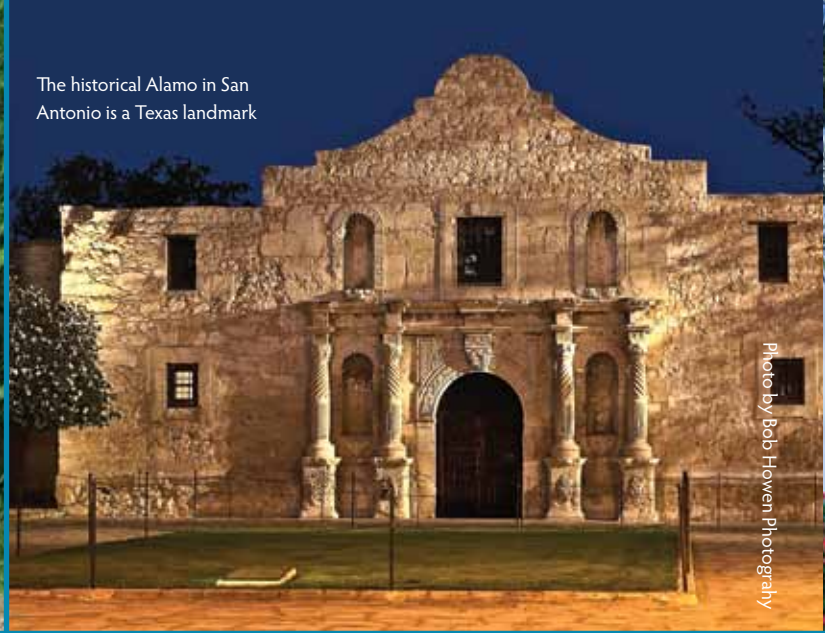


Tour Austin's natural beauty with a train ride through Zilker Park



The historical Alamo in San Antonio is a Texas landmark

Photo by Bob Howen Photography

# Fun Family Day Trips

## Texas Getaways Perfect for Your Katy Family

*Written by Miranda Enzor & Manjot Singh Jawa*

Summer's finally here, the kids are out of school, and you're looking to take a break from the hustle and bustle of Katy. While a full-fledged vacation might not be in the budget this year, day trips are an excellent way to take a vacation without breaking the bank. The only hard part will be choosing which of the hundreds of adventurous locations within driving distance from Katy you'll want to visit. Check out our top picks for fun family destinations, packed with lots of kid-friendly activities that are sure to make for a memorable summer.

### AUSTIN

Austin is not only the capitol of our state, but it's also the live music capitol of the world. With quirky local businesses around every corner and nonstop entertainment from theater to music, Austin's got it all. Getting away from the city life isn't hard either, with clear, spring-fed lakes and the pristine Texas Hill Country surrounding Austin. Only a little more than two hours away from Katy, Austin's multitude of fun family destinations beckons.



The San Antonio Riverwalk is lined with fun family restaurants and attractions

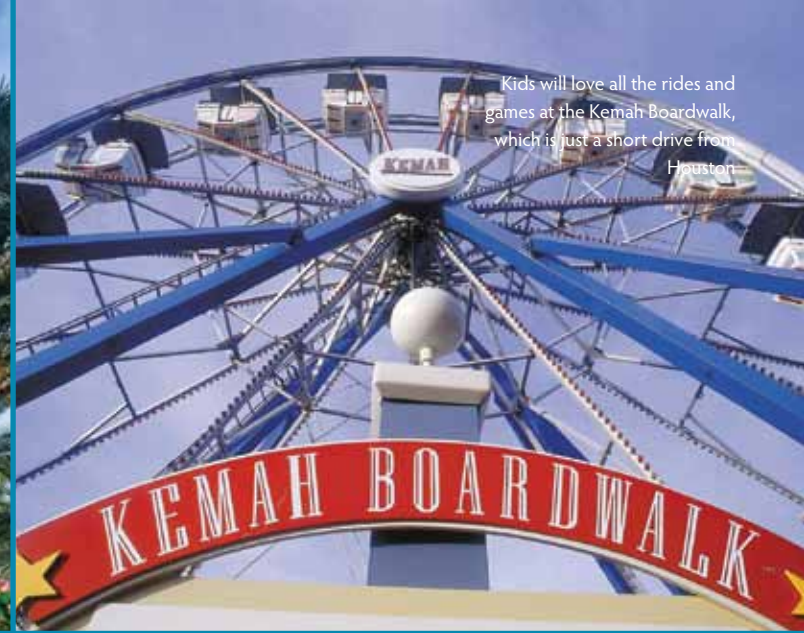
Photo by Bob Howen Photography



Corpus Christi is another fun day trip location where families can visit attractions like the Texas State Aquarium



Explore lush tropical ecosystems at the Aquarium Pyramid at Moody Gardens in Galveston



Kids will love all the rides and games at the Kemah Boardwalk, which is just a short drive from Houston

### Austin Children's Museum

With its only-in-Austin exhibits and special weekend programs, the Austin Children's Museum is a treat for anyone with Katy cuties who already love Houston's own Children's Museum.

### Barton Springs

As part of the fourth largest spring in Texas, Barton Springs offers the perfect spot for a day of swimming and summer fun in the sun.

### Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Museum

A day trip to the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Museum is both educational and picturesque. The museum brings to life the beauty of Texas' bluebonnets, Indian paintbrushes, and more in its public gardens, woodlands, and sweeping meadows.

### Zilker Park

Enjoy Zilker Park's spectacular botanical and sculpture gardens. You'll also love learning about the area's many natural springs at the Splash! Into the Edwards Aquifer exhibit. You can even bring your furry family members along and let them run wild at the off-leash dog park.

## GALVESTON

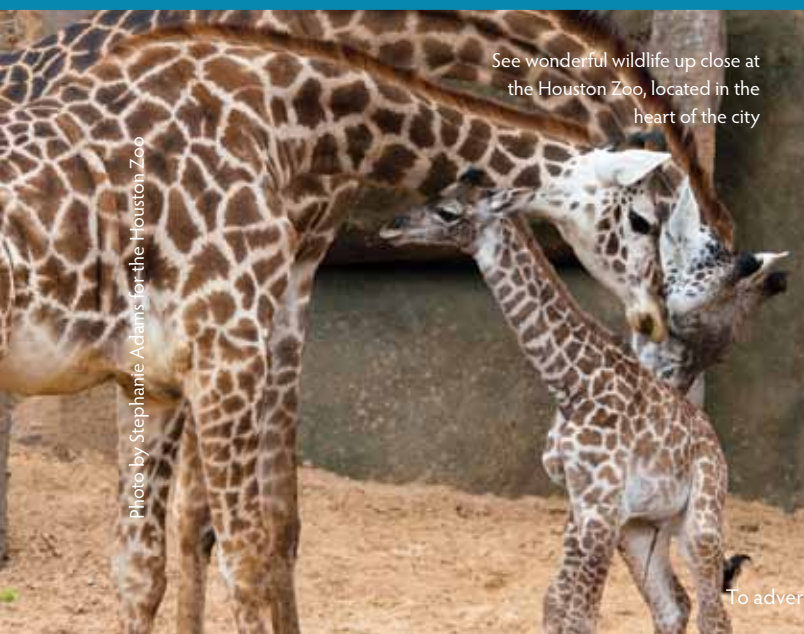
For beach babies who love soaking up the summer sun, Galveston is just a short drive away. Find your perfect sandy spot with beautiful public and private beaches spanning the entire coast of the island. When you've had your fill of fun in the sun, Galveston also has some great entertainment for the entire family.

### Moody Gardens

With 3D and 4D theaters, a private golf course, the iconic Aquarium Pyramid and brand new Rainforest Pyramid, its own private beach, and more, Moody Gardens is a top destination for Katy families who want to enjoy some summer fun. Families can see penguins up close, tour Offatts Bayou aboard the Colonel Paddlewheel Boat, or visit Galveston's only white sand beaches. Moody Gardens also hosts major concerts during the summer months. With so many options, you'll have a harder time deciding what not to do.

### Tall Ship Elissa

Deemed one of America's treasures by the National Trust for Historic Preservation, this ship was built in 1877 in Aberdeen, Scotland and is a living piece of seafaring history. Families can explore the ship and visit the neighboring Texas Seaport Museum for more maritime history.



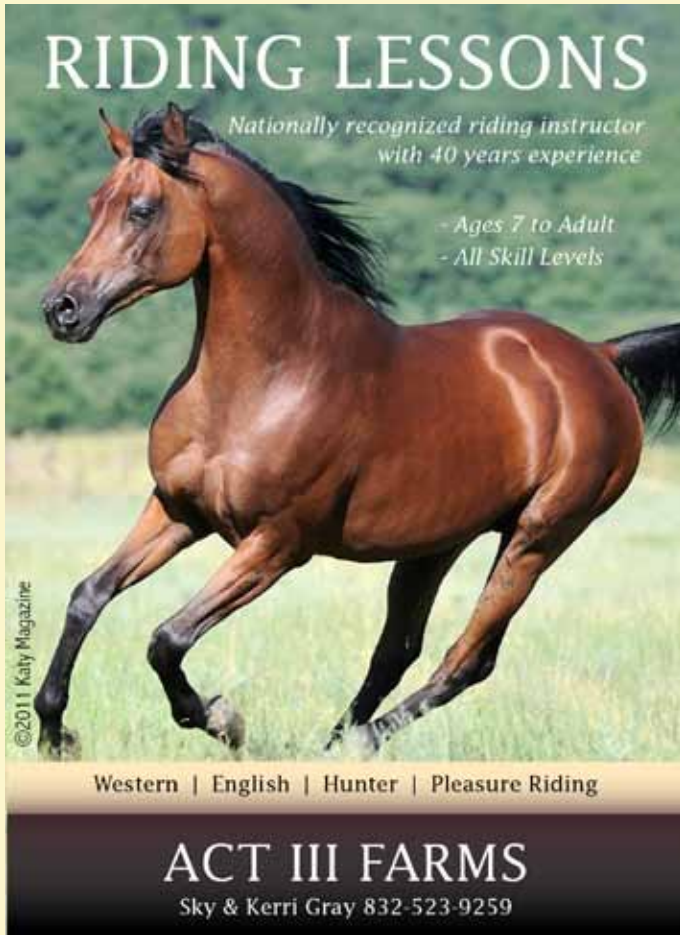
See wonderful wildlife up close at the Houston Zoo, located in the heart of the city

Photo by Stephanie Adams for the Houston Zoo



The Children's Museum of Houston is full of unique kid-friendly exhibits

Photo by C. Lyon Photography



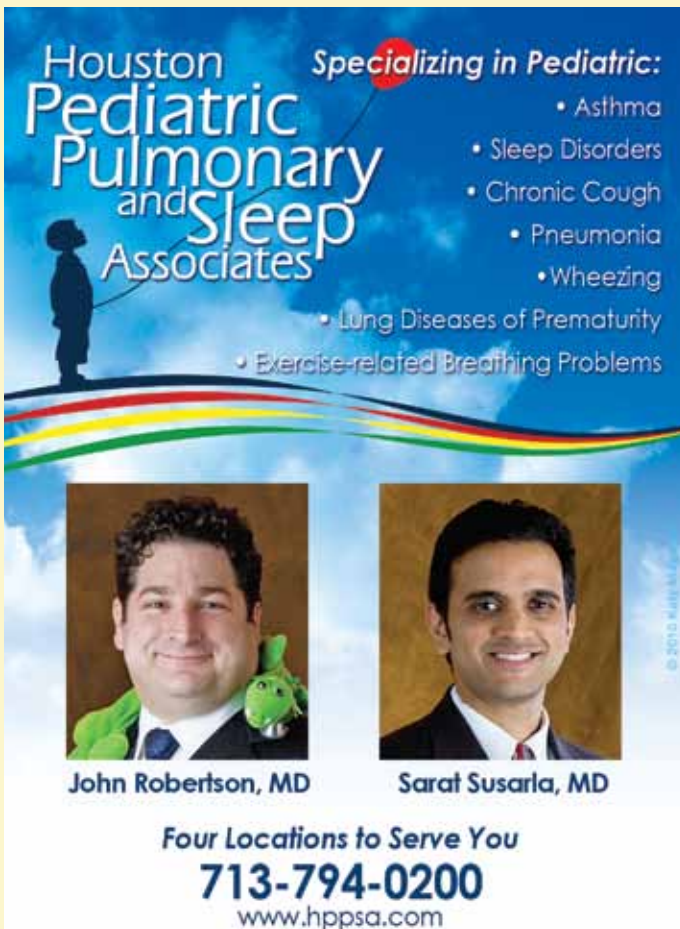
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### The Strand

Visit Galveston's historic district for great shopping, food, and the beauty of the historical buildings. For a touch of history, check out the Galveston Island Railroad Museum and Pier 21 Theater's film on the Storm of 1900.

### HOUSTON

Our hometown of Houston makes a great destination for day trips and stylish staycations. With a wealth of museums, flourishing arts, and a rich space history, Houston has a wide variety of fun activities and locales for every interest. So instead of saying, "Oh, that's too far of a drive," think of traveling to these nearby spots as a convenient mini-vacation.

### Discovery Green

With new events happening every weekend, Discovery Green is a great place for Katy to relax and unwind. Located in downtown just around the corner from Minute Maid Park, this park will keep you busy with everything from sports activities to art projects and even outdoor movies in the evening.

### George Ranch Historical Park

Take a step back in time and discover over 100 years of Texas history at George Ranch Historical Park. Located in Richmond, the park offers tours of historical homes and buildings, visits to Dry Creek General Store, and true Texas roadhouse cooking at the Dinner Belle Café.

### Museum District

With a host of fascinating attractions, the Museum District is hands-down one of the best spots in the city for a day trip. While the Children's Museum, Houston Zoo, and Museum of Natural Science are must-sees for any family with younger members, older kids might enjoy an afternoon exploring the arts at the Contemporary Arts Museum, Museum of Fine Arts, or even the Menil Collection, where admission is always free. For an educational outing, visit the Holocaust Museum Houston or John C. Freeman Weather Museum.

### Space Center Houston

A spot every Houstonian should visit, Space Center Houston gives visitors a deeper look at space with its many interactive exhibits, Imax films, and authentic space food, like astronaut ice cream. Space buffs will also love the chance to tour NASA facilities and see iconic space operations like mission control first hand.

### SAN ANTONIO

Take a walk through Texas history in scenic San Antonio. Located three hours away from Katy, San Antonio offers a wealth of culture, history, and some of the best Tex-Mex cuisine in the state. If you're a family of thrill seekers, San Antonio has several amusement parks to make your summer adventure anything but boring.

### Tower of the Americas

While San Antonio is filled with family fun, Tower of the Americas often goes overlooked. The 750-foot tower gives patrons a breathtaking view of San Antonio and beyond. Enjoy a trip to the top of the tower and visit the observation deck or make plans to enjoy lunch or dinner at the Tower Café. Want to see all of Texas from overhead? Enjoy the new Skies over Texas 4D theater ride.

### Fiesta Texas

Enjoy exciting rides like the popular Superman: Krypton Coaster or family-friendly Wagon Wheel. For those looking to cool off, check out White Water Bay, full of ways to splash into summer.

## Riverwalk

Enjoy a lazy afternoon of lunching and shopping at San Antonio's most popular vacation destination. Take a boat trip down the river and learn about the city's culture. Visit the new Museum Reach section, which features over 1.3 renovated and restored miles of the Riverwalk.

## SeaWorld

Get the chance to see whales, dolphins, and other marine life up close. Enjoy rides like the Steel Eel or visit SeaWorld's own Lost Lagoon waterpark.

## The Alamo

The Alamo brings a slice of the Lone Star State's thrilling history to life. The Texas landmark spotlights an important battle on the path to the state's independence. Whether you're new to Texas or were born here, visiting the Alamo is always a safe bet for fun and learning.

## Embark on an Adventure

No matter where you wind up, you're sure to find a great day trip location to create memories with friends and family. Texas is full of adventures waiting to be discovered by Katy families. KM

*MIRANDA ENZOR loves to jump in a car with friends and explore new parts of Texas.*

*MANJOT "MANNY" SINGH JAWA is a local student in the class of 2012. He also enjoys summer road trips.*

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