

Away to AMARILLO

This north Texan city captures the charm and spirit of the old West



Take in the rugged drama of Palo Duro Canyon State Park

Immortalised in the song by Tony Christie, Amarillo offers an authentic taste of cowboy culture, surrounded by sprawling working ranches and open plains that glow like a golden patchwork under the Texan sun. Its attractions include nature, music and history, along with the kind of hearty food that sustains a long day in the saddle.

Route 66

A dazzling neon sign heralds Amarillo's Historic Route 66

District, one of the first residential and business districts of the city. It boasts a mile of eclectic establishments and 'Mom & Pop' businesses, like The Handle Bar for bike repairs and Aunt Eek's for books. Then there's The Nat, a former dance palace and music venue where the likes of Duke Ellington, Buddy Holly and Elvis played. Don't miss the city's oldest cafe – the GoldenLight Cantina, established back in 1946, which hosts regular music events. Live music is part of the culture here, whether it's bands strumming on stage or performing in makeshift parking lots to an appreciative audience nodding their Stetsons and jingling their spurs.

One of the key symbols of Route 66 culture lies just outside the city limits at Cadillac Ranch. This public art installation, created in 1974, consists of half-buried graffiti-covered Cadillacs standing upright in a row. Take a can of spray paint to add your style to these iconic cars. There's also a line-up of half-buried Volkswagen Beetles and old



Add your own art at Amarillo's Cadillac Ranch

limos at the Slug Bug Ranch 15 minutes away.

Beef and BBQ

From street stalls to hearty soul food, Amarillo is the place to go for beef and BBQ. Make sure you save up a healthy appetite for when you visit the iconic Big Texan Steak Ranch (bigtexan.com), a venue renowned for its 72oz Steak Dinner Challenge. Prime Texas beef, buffalo burgers and calf fries feature

on the menu, while the Big Texan Brewery is the Texas Panhandle's only hand-crafted brewery.

In contrast, the Metropolitan Steakhouse & Seafood (metroofamarillo.com) has a stylish 1920s vibe with draped curtains and chandeliers, and serves seafood and chops paired with craft cocktails, such as a Cadillac Margarita and a Most Wanted Old Fashioned.

If you want to join local



Head to 6th Street for local goods and culture



Work up an appetite for The Big Texan

WORDS: JANE WILSON. PHOTOS: GETTY, TRAVEL TEXAS. VISIT AMARILLO. DETAILS CORRECT AT TIME OF WRITING

Get a taste
of life in
the saddle



cowboys and Harley bikers, Shelby's Diner (shelbysdineramarillo.com) offers amply stuffed burritos in a nostalgic setting, with views of planes and hangars. Bars are plentiful, and hidden under The Barfield Hotel (thebarfield.com) is a speakeasy that requires a code for entry to its busy and historical drinking den. It was founded during the prohibition by the pistol-carrying business woman, known as The Duchess.

Natural landmark

Known as the 'Grand Canyon of Texas', Palo Duro Canyon State Park is the second-largest canyon in the US, and a 30-minute drive from Amarillo. This rugged landscape is made up of rock formations moulded over millennia, including the craggy-faced Fortress Cliff. It was where the Comanches

first lived and roamed, tucked inside caves and under tepees. Together with their chief, Quanna Parker, they were the last ruling native American tribe in Amarillo.

Palo Duro covers 28,000 acres and 16 miles of the canyon, with public access to hiking trails and awe-inspiring vistas. Los Cedros Ranch (cowgirlsandcowboysinthewest.com) offers horse-riding treks along the canyon rim, trotting and galloping between cacti, cedar and mesquite in open plains where part of *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade* was filmed. As the sun goes down, tuck into a typical chuck-wagon dinner while hearing tales of long ago. It is often said that the soul of the land can be heard. Listen carefully, and you may hear the thud of ghost hooves galloping around the rim.

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- * Best Western Plus Amarillo East Hotel is conveniently sited for downtown Amarillo; doubles from £71 per night; bestwestern.com
- * Find out more at visitamarillo.com

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4 Star Antequera Hills Hotel

The hotel is within walking distance of the town centre and has an outdoor swimming pool (seasonal), its own gardens, terraces and a bar. The well-appointed bedrooms are spacious and comfortable and have satellite TV, telephone, safety deposit box, mini bar and en-suite bathroom. Accommodation at the hotel is on a half board basis with breakfast and dinner included in the holiday price.



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