

## feature

What first comes to mind when you hear San Antonio? Is it the famous river walk, the Alamo, the Pearl District, Tower of Americas or Fiesta celebrations? Whether you plan a romantic getaway weekend filled with music and dining, a trip with your family to the zoo and theme parks, or a girls' trip at the Pearl district, to explore the missions and shop along the River Walk, the possibilities are endless as Alamo City or Military City, USA celebrates 300 years in 2018!



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# 2018 - Happy 300th Birthday, San Antonio!

**A** city with rich heritage, San Antonio the seventh-most populous city in the United States and the second-most populous city in both Texas and the Southern United States. It is best known, among other things, for the San Antonio Spurs, the Alamo, great Tex-Mex food, the River Walk with cafes and shops, SeaWorld, its sizable military presence, and the Tower of the Americas.

Long before the Alamo fell, before William Barret Travis's letter and call to action for "Victory or Death", there was this place, by a clear river where people gathered. **San Antonio was given its name on June 13, 1691, because that was the feast day of St. Anthony of Padua**, the day that a Spanish expedition came to the river they called Rio San Antonio. **But San Antonio was not founded until 1718, when its first mission and first presidio were established at San Pedro Springs.** The building in San Antonio now called the Alamo originally was built as the chapel of the Mission San Antonio de Valero. Valero mission was established at San Pedro Springs in present-day San Antonio in 1718 by Fray Antonio de San Buenaventura y Olivares, a Franciscan missionary of the College of Santa Cruz de Querétaro. Like all Spanish missions, Valero was a combination of religious and industrial trade school for Indians. The Tejanos, a group of mostly Spanish-Indians loyal to the Spanish crown, pushed their colonial empire north from Mexico to found a military post and religious missions.

What most Americans think of when they think of San Antonio is the city's world-famous River Walk that expands past the downtown area and is 15 miles long! In 2009, a new extension of the River Walk connected the San Antonio Zoo, the Japanese Tea Gardens, Brackenridge Park, the historic Pearl District, and three museums: The Witte, The Doseum, and The San Antonio Museum of Art. Water taxis for hire allow visitors and locals to relax and enjoy the views as they venture to Downtown for dinner or



explore the Missions district. The River Walk itself is a network of walkways along the river, one story beneath the streets of San Antonio. Lined by bars, shops, restaurants, nature, public artwork, and the five historic missions, River Walk winds and loops under bridges as two parallel sidewalks lined with restaurants and shops, connecting the major tourist draws.

The River Walk also welcomes several river parades throughout the year. Fiesta San Antonio River Parade features flowery floats that float down the river during Fiesta's eleven days of partying. Armed Forces Day River Parade is a patriotic parade dedicated to the men and women of the Armed Forces with twenty-five



star spangled floats carrying representatives of all 5 branches of military personnel with ranks ranging from Junior Enlisted to General. Finally, the Ford Holiday River Parade rings in the holidays with a night parade filled with lights, costumed float riders and music.

But here's more about this city.....

Home to several U.S military bases, San Antonio officially adopted its trademark of Military City, USA in 2017. The U.S. armed forces have numerous facilities in and around San Antonio: Fort Sam Houston, Lackland Air Force Base, Randolph Air Force Base, Lackland AFB/Kelly Field Annex, Camp Bullis, and Camp Stanley. San Antonio is a prime landing zone for military retirees transitioning in civilian life. Today the city has one of the nation's largest active and retired military populations. The city is also home to the Department of Defense's largest medical center at Joint Base San





Antonio Fort Sam Houston. Every year the city welcomes the families of the 39,000 students who graduate from military training here each year.

In 2017 San Antonio landed five companies on the Fortune 500 companies to include iHeart Media Inc., CST Brands Inc., USAA, Valero Energy Corp, Tesoro Corp, and the South Texas Medical Center, the only medical research and care provider in the South Texas region.

And more....

Six Flags Fiesta Texas is celebrating its 25th Anniversary with new rides and events. SeaWorld San Antonio's combination of unique animal attractions, entertaining shows and thrilling state-of-the-art coasters make this park an exciting place to be! The original Schlitterbahn, just 20 minutes north of San Antonio in New Braunfels, has over 65 acres of tube rides, water slides and uphill water coasters. Splashtown San Antonio is 20 landscaped acres of cool, clean water excitement just three minutes north of downtown. Morgan's Wonderland was designed with special-needs individuals in mind and built for everyone's enjoyment. The 25-acre, completely wheelchair-accessible



park features more than 25 attractions plus the all new Splash Island - the world's first ultra-accessible splash park. Alamo Plaza Attractions include Ripley's Believe it or Not, Ripley's Haunted Adventure, Louis Tussaud's WaxWorks, Tomb Raider 3D, and the Guinness World Records Museum.



There are so many things about San Antonio that you can enjoy. If you missed the Bidi Bidi Banda, Little Joe Y La Familia and Sam Riggs at the fabulous concert and fireworks at New Year's Eve kick-off party for San Antonio's Tricentennial, or the U.S. Army All American Bowl on January 6th, don't worry, celebrations celebrating San Antonio 300 continue the entire year. No matter what time of the year you decide to visit, you will be able to enjoy several events and activities celebrating San Antonio's 300 years. Here are just a few.

March 31 - April 2 - 2018 NCAA Final Four

April 19 - 29 - Fiesta - [www.fiesta-sa.org](http://www.fiesta-sa.org) - Fiesta San Antonio started in 1891 as a one-parade event as a way to honor the memory of the heroes of the Alamo and the Battle of San Jacinto. It has evolved into one of this nation's premier festivals and is the Party with a Purpose. There are nine Official Royalty, two Kings and seven Queens, who reign over Viva! Fiesta!

The Tricentennial Commemorative Week, May 1-6, 2018, is one week you won't want to miss. For six days, San Antonio will showcase its diversity through educational, artistic, and entertaining events.

May 1 is a day of reflections. All faith-based communities will join together for a community candlelight vigil and sunset services at Main Plaza. This day of reflection is led by the Archdiocese and other religious leaders for the community to come together with a communal prayer. Interfaith services will be held at places of worship through San Antonio with a central, candlelight service at Main Plaza.

May 2 will focus on history and education. Public, private, parochial and homeschool students will work on exhibits to be put on display at libraries, schools, and museums. A "tree-centennial" program is also scheduled, 300 trees will be planted at various locations across the city.

May 3 is Founders Day. A Founder's Gala will celebrate the city's multinational



culture by focusing on the city's founding mothers and fathers.

May 4 will be geared toward the arts. Museums, art venues, and theaters will offer free admission. Also on this day the tricentennial art piece will be unveiled.



May 5 is Legacy Day, which honor the contributions of the missions in San Antonio. Throughout the World Heritage Site there will be five miles of musical entertainment, health and fitness activities, and tours culminating in fireworks over every Mission at night. The San Antonio River Authority will also dedicate the transformation of San Pedro Creek.

May 6 will focus on the military and the city's rich military history.

Take the time this year to enjoy what this beautiful fun historic city has to offer. There's something to enjoy all year long. To learn more about San Antonio and its 2018 celebrations please go to <https://www.sanantonio300.org> or <http://visitsanantonio.com/300>. For major events and festivals in 2018, check out <http://visitsanantonio.com/english/Explore-San-Antonio/Events/Major-Events-And-Festivals>.

