

ROMANTIC AUSTIN

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Romantic Austin

by Becca Hensley



(Photo: AustinTexas.org)

There are few things more romantic than watching a fiery tangerine sun drop into a lake so limpid and far-reaching that it might be nature's infinity pool. Take in this spectacle with your lover at [The Oasis](#), a rambling, waterfront bar with decks overlooking Lake Travis. This is Austin's most storied spot to bid the sun adieu, Margarita in hand. When the sun disappears into the horizon, the sky glows with a violet opalescent light that inspires a round of applause from the audience.

If you imagine Austin as a quilt of dusty stampede trails accented with cowboys rustling Longhorn cattle and a windswept flow of tumbleweeds crossing the prairie, you'll have to adjust your vision. Located in the middle of the state, amid lakes, vineyards and peach orchards, Austin is a different part of Texas. In this beguiling setting, couples will be seduced by nature's attractions. With ample promontories for perching, Lake Austin, situated in the western part of the city center, provides perfect picnic points just minutes from the urban buzz. A popular lover's hideaway since the 1850's, Mount Bonnell Park sits atop a stone staircase above Lake Austin (a portion of the Colorado River), where it affords jaw-dropping water vistas.

Parks, hiking trails, natural springs, and a busy boating culture – including watercraft from kayaks to motorboats – epitomize Austin's year-round recreation opportunities. To take advantage of the fresh air as Austinites do, sail away at dusk on Lake Travis, ride stand-up-paddleboards à deux on Lake Austin, or float beneath the [Congress Avenue Bridge](#) on a summer evening in a canoe to watch the bats emerge for their nightly feeding.

For date night, reserve a table at Jeffrey's in Clarksville, an intimate, contemporary steakhouse tucked away in a quiet neighborhood. The locally inspired menu features celebration-worthy, carnivore-pleasing cuts of meat – such as a dry-aged Niman Ranch 36-ounce Cote de Boeuf with bone marrow bordelaise (\$140) that is perfect for sharing. Crispy fried Gulf oysters, lobster and caviar blini, and seared Hudson Valley foie gras are just a few of the sexy items on the menu. Sofia Coppola ate here last year during the Austin City Limits music festival with her hubby, French rocker Thomas Mars. They snagged a secluded corner table, and so can you.

For a couple's spa day, book a day package at Lake Austin Spa Resort, where you can lounge by the pool, hike the garden paths or nap in a hammock after relaxing with a Swedish massage for two in the couple's suite. Even better, plan to spend a night or two at this luxurious resort on the bank of Lake Austin. If your honey is still not impressed, take her on a horse-drawn-carriage ride around downtown, hire a chauffeur to drive you through the wine country, or see Austin from the sky via a helicopter tour.

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