



San Antonio

**A Legacy Steeped in History,
A Culture Rich in Diversity**

Although most famous for the Alamo, San Antonio is home to many other significant historical events, and has a rich background of historical and cultural diversity. Founded in 1691 by Franciscan Father Damian Massanet, San Antonio was named after the Feast Day of St. Anthony of Padova.

A Richly Diverse History

Influences from the original Spanish settlers, German and Polish settlers, and an influx of the Mexican people have made San Antonio the diverse city it is today. German and Polish settlers, as well as Mexicans, populated and dominated San Antonio's cultural landscape throughout the 19th Century. The Germans brought with them a culture steeped in classical teachings in architecture, music and art. German communities sprung up all over the area, and in 1856 a prominent German-English School was founded to educate the children of German intellectuals in the area. Beethoven Hall was built by an association dedicated to German classical music and was once known as the finest concert hall in the Southwest.

Mostly Roman Catholics, German immigrants built a number of churches in San Antonio. One of the area churches employed a Polish priest who had come over to do missionary work. Leopold Moczygemba settled in the town of New Braunfels as pastor of Saint Peter and Paul Church. Moczygemba observed the advantages his German counterparts had realized by emigrating and began writing letters to his countrymen encouraging them to come to Texas. When the Polish settlers arrived he helped them establish the oldest Polish settlement in the United States called Panna Maria, meaning the Virgin Mary. In 1966 Panna Maria celebrated the millennium of Polish Christianity and in 1986 Pope John Paul II, the first Polish Pope, visited San Antonio and spoke honoring Father Moczygemba.

Because of the many people living in poverty, San Antonio was home to one of the only communist movements in the American South. Just before the Americans entered WWII, a local woman named Emma Tenayuca organized communist labor protests, strikes and demonstrations. In 1937 she requested to hold a communist rally at San Antonio's municipal auditorium. Despite mounting opposition, the mayor granted the request, and although only 100 members participated, over 5,000 protesters showed up and a riot ensued, ending communist activity in the South at that time.

The Mexicans, mostly poor, added another dimension to the culture that is still seen today. Mexicans remain a major influence in the culture of San Antonio. One hundred years ago, the Mexican market was at the heart of life in San Antonio. The farmers market, meat market and produce row were all part of the bustling activity at the Mexican market. One of the major fixtures at the market was the Chili Queens. These women prepared

The Alamo



**King William
District House**





and sold chili and other dishes to the market customers who included ranchers, tourists and local shoppers. It is probable that chili was unique to San Antonio. With the availability of meat and a new influx of people at the market, these recipes were the basis for the popular style of cooking we now know as Tex-Mex cuisine.

The Birthplace of Aviation

During the early days of aviation, San Antonio was the place to be. Fort Sam Houston was at the center of developing aviation technology at the beginning of the 20th century. On March 2, 1910 the first military flight took place there and lasted seven minutes with a speed of up to 50 miles per hour. This was the beginning of aviation in the military. In 1915 the first aero squadron was formed to fight in the Pancho Villa skirmishes in Mexico.

Military installations such as Brooks Field and Kelly Field, were established for training Army flyers. The military began developing plane, balloon airship, and parachute warfare techniques at this time. As aviation grew, larger training facilities were needed, and in 1930 Randolph Field was opened and became known as the 'West Point of the Air.' In addition to being the nation's primary flight school, the complex created an unprecedented number of jobs, changing the economic landscape





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of San Antonio forever. Fifteen years later, the San Antonio Aviation Cadet Center was opened, and later grew into Lackland Air Force Base. Lackland, the military's most widely recognized base, is known as the 'Gateway to the Air Force.'

San Antonio is also home to the renowned Stinson Flying School. Katherine Stinson was an aviation pioneer when aviation was dominated by men. In 1915, the Stinson Flying Company, family-owned, opened in San Antonio. An excellent pilot and even better mechanic, Katherine Stinson set and broke numerous aviation records and was the first woman to perform aviation stunts such as the loop the loop, and nighttime skywriting. She toured the world, thrilling her many fans and admirers, and breaking flying records along the way. Although not allowed to participate in the World War I effort using her aviation talents, she did spend her time raising money for the Red Cross to support the troops.

Katherine's younger sister, Marjorie, also a pilot, trained over 80 pilots who later served in World War I.

In addition to its long aviation history, San Antonio is home to Sam the Space Monkey. Sam was the first Texan to travel in space, and he provided much information on the effects of weightlessness on the body. Sam spent a total of twelve minutes in space and upon his return to Earth, he was studied for eleven years at Brooks Air Force Base. He then retired to the San Antonio Zoo where he died in 1978.

**Mission san Jose y
San Miguel**





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The River Walk

The River Walk is the center of activity in San Antonio, and is a large part of the reason for the city's popularity. However, it did have its problems along the way. The River Walk was originally conceived to improve the downtown area and keep merchants from using the back of their properties as dumping grounds. The proposed plan would feature shops and parks along the river, complete with restaurants offering international cuisine. Initially proposed by Robert Hugman in 1929, the idea was far ahead of its time.

Times were difficult and money was scarce for such an ambitious project, but when the Works Project Administration came into being as a way of getting people back to work, the WPA allocated \$325,000 for the project. Another key group that was instrumental in the initial success of the River Walk project was the women of the Conservation Society. Their effort to beautify the walk was a major victory.

In its infancy, the River Walk was far from successful. In fact, during the remainder of the Depression, labor to maintain the walk was scarce and the project fell into ruin. However, in 1963, a number of the city's business leaders came together with the notion of using a run-down part of the city near the downtown section as a starting place for spurring business growth. Five years later, the site was used to host the 1968 World's Fair. The walk was expanded towards the Convention Center, and restaurants, shops and hotels began to show a renewed interest in the property along the river. Once this momentum began, it continued through the years. Today, the River Walk remains a highly successful and beautiful attraction in the heart of San Antonio.

Other Items of Note

San Antonio is the original birthplace of the 'whopper burger.' Because of copyright laws, Burger King was unable to open restaurants in San Antonio until 'Whopper Burger' was bought out by the Pillsbury Company and the remainder of the restaurants closed down or were transformed into Burger Kings.

San Antonio also claims the Frito as its own. The founder of the Frito-Lay company, Elmer Doolin, discovered the chip in 1932 at a local lunch stand. He bought the recipe for one hundred dollars and began producing the chips from his mother's kitchen. The rest, as they say, is history...

San Antonio is the original birthplace of the "whopper burger" and the Frito-Lay company.



Tower of Americas

