

4 Austin, Texas

BY APRIL KILCREASE



TEXAS HOEDOWN

WHY GO: Known as the “live music capital of the world,” Austin earns its title every spring during **the annual South by Southwest (SXSW) festival**. At the 25th anniversary event, March 16 to 20, see a wide variety of performers—from unsigned soul singers to legendary bluegrass bands—**play outdoor BBQ joints, small bars, and downtown street corners**.

FANGTASIA

At sunset from mid-March to early November, the world’s largest urban bat colony swoops out from underneath the Congress Avenue Bridge. Watch as 1.5 million Mexican free-tail bats zip through the air, feeding on up to 20,000 pounds of insects. For the best view, spread out a blanket on the grass next to the *Austin American-Statesman* building.



WHERE TO HEAR

In a town full of music venues, it can be hard to decide where to go first. Will Sheff, lead singer for the Austin indie rock band *Okkervil River*—whose sixth album, *I Am Very Far*, comes out in May—pares down the list.

Emo’s

“Emo’s has a lot of local band nights, and they’ve also had legends, including Johnny Cash, play there. It’s the epitome of Austin—an unpretentious, homey, friendly, punk dive.”

603 Red River St., (512) 505-8541, emosaustin.com

Scottish Rite Community and Children’s Theatre

“What I like about this elegant theater is its air of mystery and romanticism. I’ve seen shows there where the audience was completely rapt.”

207 W. 18th St., (512) 472-5436, scottishritechildrenstheatre.org

Donn’s Depot

“The owner’s band, Donn and the Station Masters, plays three-hour sets on Tuesdays and Fridays. All kinds of people will be dancing and drinking. It feels like a taste of Austin from the ‘60s and ‘70s.”

1600 W. 5th St., (512) 478-0336, donnar.home.texas.net



Tortilla Sunrise

Whether you roll out of bed at 6 a.m. or 2 p.m., start your day with Austin’s favorite Tex-Mex invention: the breakfast taco. A hometown institution, the Tamale House (5003 Airport Blvd.) serves eggs and bacon wrapped in a flour tortilla. At Maria’s Taco Xpress (2529 S. Lamar Blvd., pictured top left), try the *migas* tacos, which include scrambled eggs and crushed tortilla chips.

Or jump-start your taste buds with a jalapeño sausage taco at Torchy’s truck (1311 S. First St.).

Rockabye Rooms

Named after the patron saint of music and poetry, the Hotel Saint Cecilia mixes Southern comfort with rock ‘n’ roll style. Ringed by old oak trees, the estate includes five suites in the original Victorian-era clapboard house, six poolside bungalows, and three studios. The main building has an extensive vinyl record library, and each room comes equipped with a turntable.

From \$295, 112 Academy Dr., (512) 852-2400, hotelsaintcecilia.com



ALTERNATIVE VIEW

Browse folk art at Yard Dog gallery. Along with its focus on work from the Deep South, the gallery also exhibits pieces by musicians, such as local singer-songwriter Daniel Johnston. During SXSW, check out performances in the intimate backyard. My Morning Jacket and Neko Case have played there in the past.

1510 S. Congress Ave., (512) 912-1613, yarddog.com



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: JOAO CANZIANI, DON BAYLEY/ISTOCKPHOTO, ALLISON V. SMITH, MIKE EGAN, EDBLEARIA.COM