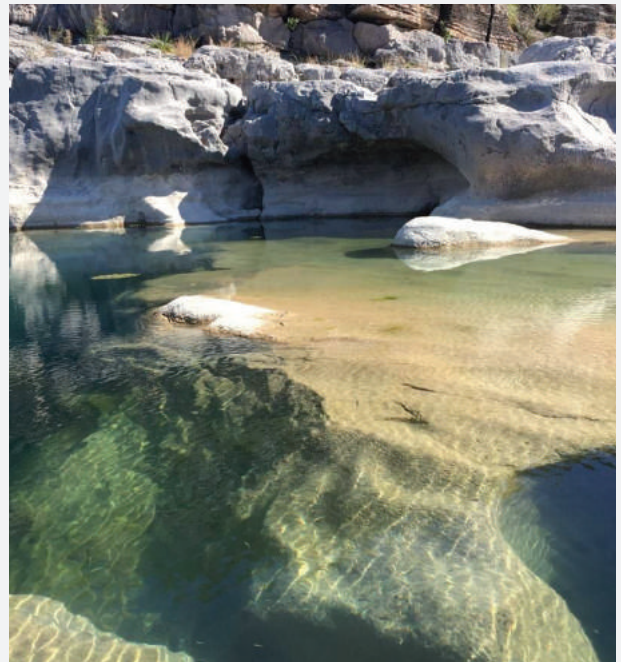




Johnson City Coffee Co.



Pedernales Falls State Park

Destination: Johnson City

Explore the 'Crossroads' of Texas Hill Country *By Cindy Brzostowski*

Founded in 1879 by an uncle of President Lyndon B. Johnson, Johnson City is only an hour from Austin, about half-way to Fredericksburg. While the small town is famous for its connection to the former POTUS, that's not all it has going for it. Along with historical sites are nature, unique family attractions and plenty of good food and drinks. What more could you want on your next day trip? When planning your itinerary, these are some of the top spots to check out in the city nicknamed the 'Crossroads of the Texas Hill Country'.

ADVENTURE AWAITS

While on your way out to Johnson City, your first stop should be Pedernales Falls State Park. Spanning more than 5,200 acres, the park offers ample opportunities to hike, swim, mountain bike, horseback ride and fish. The falls itself is delightful, too, as the water cascades down wide, layered steps of limestone.

Exotic animals in Johnson City? It's true! At the Exotic Resort Zoo, you can take a guided tour through the expansive property, home to more than 600 animals, including camels, bison, zebras and ostriches. With just a little imagination, it can feel like a mini-safari in the middle of Texas.

LEARN & PLAY

You can't appreciate Johnson City without learning a bit more about LBJ. Head to the Boyhood Home of LBJ to see where the former president lived from the age of five until his high school graduation. Although it's actually in the nearby town of Stonewall, less than 15 minutes away, the Lyndon B. Johnson National Historical Park is also a must-visit in the area. There, you can tour the ranch where LBJ was born, lived, died and laid to rest.

When you're done with history, move on to science at the Science Mill. Located in a 19th-century feed mill, this kid-friendly museum is full of fun interactive science and technology exhibits. >>



PHOTOGRAPHY CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: JOHNSON CITY COFFEE CO.; PEDERNALES FALLS STATE PARK; SCIENCE MILL

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Photo by Krishna Aduru, Sept. 2017

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Bryans on 290



Bryans on 290



Johnson City Coffee Co.



Pecan Street Brewing

ARTS & ARTISANS

If you're looking for the right time to visit Johnson City, aim for the fourth weekend of the month so you can catch Johnson City Market Days. During these Saturdays and Sundays, various vendors and artisans congregate downtown in City Park.

Art lovers can also spend some time at Echo, a self-proclaimed 'non-gallery' art gallery that hosts the work of more than 30 artists. Anyone with an interest in photography may also want to stop at A Smith Gallery. This local spot exhibits the work of both amateur and professional photographers, and you can check what's currently on display at asmithgallery.com

GOOD FOOD, GOOD FUN

With all that sightseeing, you'll need some fuel for your

body, and there are some choice options. For starters, there's Bryans on 290, an upscale casual restaurant where you can enjoy dishes such as grilled scallops and cast iron-seared salmon. For something more low-key, make a pit stop at Fat Boy Burgers for a juicy cheeseburger. Another satisfying option is El Charro Restaurant, which serves up scrumptious fajitas.

When you need a caffeine pick-me-up, the charming Johnson City Coffee Co. is the place to go. You must try Kay's honey pecan latte, a house specialty made with espresso, steamed milk, honey and pecan syrup.

DRINK UP

Out in the Hill Country, it seems there's always a nice option nearby when you want to satisfy your thirst, and Johnson City doesn't disappoint. One block off Main Street, >>

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Pecan Street Brewing



Lyndon B. Johnson boyhood home

Exotic animals in Johnson City? It's true! At the Exotic Resort Zoo, you can take a guided tour through the expansive property; home to more than 600 animals, including camels, bison, zebras and ostriches.

Pecan Street Brewing is the perfect place to unwind with a cold one. The beer is brewed on-site and quaffed in a pet-friendly beer garden. They serve pub food, too, if you're feeling peckish.

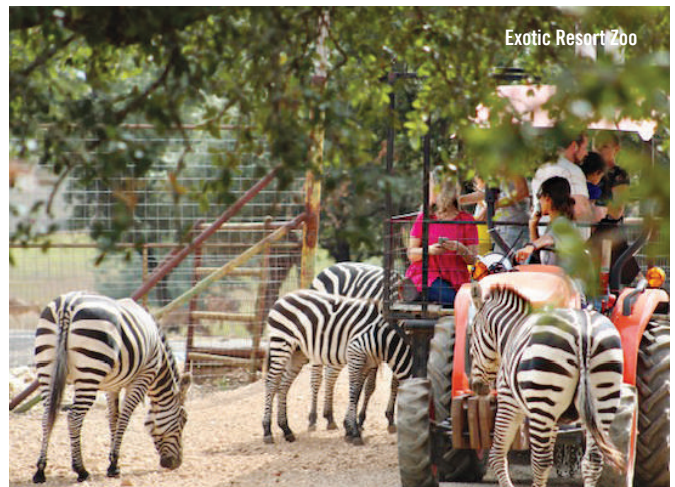
If you prefer wine, there's 290 Vinery. This family-owned establishment usually has at least 15 different wines available for tastings. A bit outside the center of town, you'll find Texas Hills Vineyard, where the tasting patio overlooks 25 acres of vineyards.

BONUS: STAY ATOP HILL COUNTRY

With all there is to see and do in Johnson City, you may feel like spending the night. Lighthouse Hill Ranch offers visitors a unique getaway. With an assortment of suites and ranch homes, this picturesque property has over 2,000 acres to explore. And yes, you can stay in the 86-foot-tall lighthouse, which itself is situated atop a 200-foot hill. Needless to say, you'll get some amazing views of the Hill Country if you stay there, in addition to access to the property's trails, lakes, pools and fishing ponds.



Exotic Resort Zoo



Exotic Resort Zoo

PHOTOGRAPHY COURTESY OF PECAN STREET BREWING; JOHNSON CITY TEXAS CHAMBER; EXOTIC RESORT ZOO