

# America The Beautiful

## The Vacation Treasures Of The Texas-Mexico Border

(NAPSA)—A growing number of families are seeking vacation destinations that offer relaxation, excitement and learning. That's why many are heading for the border—specifically the parks and campgrounds found along the border between Texas and Mexico.

There, a family can find a mix of cultural, educational and outdoor activities designed to fit just about any vacation budget.

For example, there's Big Bend National Park, encompassing 801,163 acres of magnificent contrasts. Visitors can travel from the Rio Grande to the Chisos Mountains of Western Texas. Its variations in elevation and temperature make Big Bend an ideal year-round park. The park also has an amazing diversity of plant life, with more than 1,200 Mexican and American plant types.

Animal life is just as varied. Desert wildlife is mostly nocturnal, but deer, coyotes, javelinas, gray fox, skunks, raccoons, and jackrabbits might be seen during the day.

Lucky visitors may spot some of the rarer animals, such as ring-tail, black bear, beaver, and mountain lion. More than 450 bird species have been identified, a greater variety than at any other national park.

More than 150 miles of hiking trails are available through the park, ranging from short, easy nature walks to primitive trails for experienced hikers.

Not far from the Big Bend area, near the city of Del Rio, is Amistad National Recreation Area (NRA). Amistad is known for excellent year-round, water-based recreation including boating, fish-



Photo Credit: Vicki Stephens

**The parks along the Texas-Mexico border offer families a wide array of vacation attractions.**

ing, swimming, scuba diving and waterskiing.

Amistad also provides opportunities for picnicking, camping and hunting.

Additional aquatic activities can be found on 110-mile long South Padre Island off of Texas' Gulf Coast—one of the last natural seashores in the nation.

Each end of the narrow sand island is developed with parks and resorts. But in between, the National Seashore preserves an unblemished 80-mile stretch of coastline that features swimming beaches, extensive primitive beach-camping areas and nature trails.

The park also conducts a number of programs for young people. For instance, there's a Junior Ranger Program for children from 5-13.

To learn more about these and other vacation destinations, visit [www.traveltex.com](http://www.traveltex.com).