

3 Days in San Antonio Under \$500

A day-by-day itinerary with real costs: where to go, what to eat, what to skip.

A sample build from the Research Studio
amauryrecommends.com/studio/

The ground rules

Budget: \$500 per person, excluding flights. Assumes a downtown hotel split two ways, mostly walking and streetcar, and one nice dinner. San Antonio is one of the cheapest fun cities in Texas — this plan leans into that.

When to go

March–April or October–November. Summer is brutally hot and the River Walk crowds peak. Hotel prices below assume shoulder season, booked 3+ weeks out.

Day 1 — River Walk & the Alamo

Morning

The Alamo (free, go at 9am opening to beat crowds — 90 minutes is plenty). Then wander the River Walk; the stretch north of the bend is quieter.

Afternoon

San Antonio Museum of Art — \$20, or free on Tuesdays 4–9pm. The Latin American wing alone is worth it. Grab tacos at Rosario's (\$12) on the way back.

Evening

Dinner on the River Walk will drain the budget — eat one block off it instead. Boudro's guacamole for two (\$24) then walk the lit River Walk after dark (free and the best version of it).

Day spend: ~\$56 (food, entries, transport)

Day 2 — Missions & Market Square

Morning

Mission San José + Mission Concepción — both free, both stunning. The full Mission Trail is 8 miles; rideshare between the two best ones (\$10) beats biking in the heat.

Afternoon

Historic Market Square — free to wander, best people-watching in the city. Lunch at Mi Tierra (\$16): the mariachi, the murals, the pan dulce. Buy nothing you cannot carry.

Evening

Pearl District: free to explore, great for dinner. Cured or Supper — budget \$35 for a proper nice meal. End with paletas from the paleta stand (\$4).

Day spend: ~\$65 (food, entries, transport)

Day 3 — King William & farewell

Morning

King William Historic District walking tour — free, self-guided, gorgeous 19th-century mansions. Coffee at Estate Coffee (\$5).

Afternoon

The Saga or Hopscotch immersive art (\$20) — weird in the best way. Final lunch: Schilo's deli (\$13), operating since 1917.

Evening

Sunset at the Tower of the Americas? Skip it (\$16 for an elevator). Walk the Museum Reach of the River Walk instead — free, peaceful, herons included.

Day spend: ~\$38 (food, entries, transport)

Full budget breakdown (per person)

Item	Cost
Hotel (3 nights, split 2 ways)	\$210
Food & drink	\$140
Entries & activities	\$60
Transport (rideshares + streetcar)	\$35
Buffer	\$55
TOTAL	\$500

What to skip

- Ripley's / wax museums on the River Walk — tourist traps at tourist prices.
- River barge tour (\$14) — pretty, but the free walk covers the same ground.
- Renting a car — downtown is walkable and parking runs \$25+/day.

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