



Splash Pads Bring the Summer Fun

With Austin's sweltering summers, a perfect way to beat the heat is to drench it. And one of the best spots for cooling off is your local splash pad. No matter what part of town you live in, there's a splash pad close by. Here are a few we visited recently.

Round Rock

Located in charming downtown Round Rock, the Prete Plaza Fountain is a shaded splash pad composed of ground-level jets under a set of overhead shade sails. The area provides a few tables and chairs, along with grass seating. After the sun goes down, the plaza takes on a different mood, with outdoor speakers playing soft music. The plaza is conveniently located across the street from the Round Rock Public Library and within walking distance of several restaurants. For a sweet treat, Kawaii's Shaved Ice is just around the corner. There's a public restroom inside the adjacent City Hall. Parking is free and plentiful, with three surface lots, a public parking garage and street parking nearby.

Address: 221 E Main St., Round Rock **Hours:** Daily 7:30 a.m. to 10 p.m., Wed 12:30 p.m. to 3 p.m., Sat 10 a.m. to 11 p.m.



Photos by Shachi Kaushik



Photo by Sherida Mock

Bee Cave

Situated in the center of the Hill Country Galleria, this splash pad consists solely of ground-level jets. While the play area is not covered, there are tables with umbrellas set up right next to the splash pad. There's also a shaded area and a grassy amphitheater where you can sit and enjoy complimentary Wi-Fi. The splash pad is close to the Bee Cave Library and Amy's Ice Creams. One of the perks for this splash pad is that your family can combine cooling off with a little shopping or catch a movie at the Cinemark Theater. Public restrooms are available in Bldg. G, next door to Cafe Blue. The area offers complimentary parking in surface lots, three parking garages and along the streets. With maps all over the Galleria, it's easy to navigate the area.

Address: 12700 Hill Country Blvd., Bee Cave **Hours:** Daily 9 a.m. to 9 p.m.

West Austin

This splash pad graces the southern end of Pease Park, in the heart of west Austin. Unlike the other splash pads, this one is surrounded by natural beauty. The unshaded splash pad uses both ground-level jets and shower poles to deliver splashy fun. While there's no shade over the splash pad itself, there are trees alongside the walking path and tons of shaded picnic tables for taking a snack break. Hang out longer at Pease Park and enjoy other activities, such as the nearby playscape, Shoal Creek and a hiking trail that leads north to Yippee Ki Yay, a stickwork installation worthy of exploration. Restrooms are very convenient to the splash pad. Free parking is available on the street.

Address: 1600 Parkway, Austin **Hours:** Daily 9 a.m. to 8 p.m.



Photo by Shachi Kaushi

Before you head out to soak in all the fun, be sure to take along sunscreen, water shoes, sun hats and towels. You might also want to have handy some drinking water, a picnic blanket, snacks, a change of clothes and water toys. Note that splash pads might close during some holidays and for special events. Also, the water is turned off on occasion for maintenance or in the event of poor weather.

Shachi Kaushik grew up in India and hosts a monthly Hindi-English story time at the Round Rock Public Library.