

## My First Day in San Antonio – Feb. 2, 2015

My flight out of Los Angeles went off with few problems. I was able to check in on time – and only spent fifteen minutes in the TSA line! Despite all that, by the time my plane landed in San Antonio, I was starving. The quick granola bar I'd eaten before leaving the house for the airport was not enough, and the prospect of waiting in the rental car line without eating something was not appealing. To solve that problem, I stopped at the McDonald's in the terminal for a Filet o' Fish meal and a Diet Coke. Not exactly fantastic cuisine, but fine for getting over being hungry.

After a quick bite to eat, I went down to the Advantage Rental Car station in the airport to pick up my car. Sure, it was a tiny, blue Chevy Aveo – without power windows or door locks! – but it would do the trick. After all, my hotel as within walking distance to the majority of places I intended to travel during my brief stay in the city.

It was nearing 2:00 by the time I left the airport to drive twenty minutes to the Wyndham San Antonio River Walk Hotel where I would be spending the next



three nights.

After paying for my stay and dropping my belongings in my room, I headed out to the River Walk – making sure to put on a coat against the winter chill. The biggest reason for choosing this hotel was that it was right on the River Walk – an easy walk to restaurants, stores, museums, and the Alamo. But my destination for the evening was simply the River Walk itself. San Antonio's River Walk is the number one tourist attraction in the state of Texas and is home to a variety of restaurants, – including a Rainforest Cafe & Hard Rock Cafe – hotels, and museums and exhibits. It also hosts several special events each year. In fact, just last week, they hosted auditions for America's Got Talent. Part of the River Walk is also famous for its appearance in the movie Miss Congeniality with Sandra Bullock.



I could spend my entire time just walking up and down the River Walk sidewalks, but I love the stores as well. In fact, there are two large souvenir shops along the walkways. I stopped in and bought a pair of amber earrings and a postcard of the River Walk to remember my trip before heading back out to explore some more. At several times, I noticed the small tourist boats

navigating around the river and decided that I would take a boat trip before dinner. The sun was just starting to set and the lights of the River Walk were coming on everywhere. I thought it would be a perfect pre-dinner treat to take a boat ride. The boat ride was \$12.00 and it took me all over the River Walk area. The boat's captain gave a brief description of the different San Antonio landmarks as we passed them. He explained that the design of the River Walk was created to prevent flooding from overtaking the city. In September of 1921, the San Antonio River had flooded so badly that it caused \$19 million in property damage and killed 215 people. Desperate to avoid another such event, the city government created a system to control the release of water along the San Antonio River. The result has not only made San Antonio a safer place to live, but has created a great tourist spot.

By the end of the forty-five minute boat trip, the sun had completely set, I was freezing – I think it was less than forty degrees! – and was once more starving. I decided to stop at Casa Rio, the most famous Tex Mex restaurant on the River



Walk. Casa Rio

is famous not only for its great and affordable food, but also for its multi-colored umbrellas that line the river. Thankfully, Casa Rio has inside seating as well as river side seating because I was starting to shiver. I was definitely wearing my hat and scarf tomorrow night! For dinner, I ate their famous tamale plate, which is only \$6.99! Being from Southern California, I'm very picky about my tamales, and these totally met with my approval!

I finished dinner around 7:00 and decided to return to my hotel. I wasn't really tired yet, still being on Pacific time, but I desperately wanted to get inside where it was warm! Luckily, the hotel had an unknown comedian performing in the restaurant, so I stopped by for the free show. By the end of the show, my busy day had caught up with me and I was ready for bed. Goodnight, San Antonio! Looking forward to three more great days!