

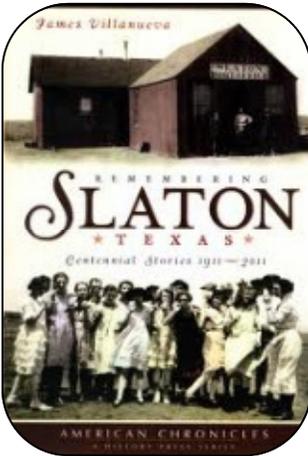
EVERY DESTINATION HAS A STORY:

SLATON, TEXAS

May 30, 2012 - 11 Days



a world to experience



Fares Per Person:

\$2790 double/twin

\$3475 single

\$2610 triple

(Tour is exempt from HST)

>**Early Bookers:** \$150 discount on first 15 seats; \$75 on next 10

>**Travel Insurance:** Plan 3-Comprehensive
\$265 double/twin, \$330 single, \$248 triple



Experience Points Bonus: Book by **March 15** and redeem up to **52 e-points**

Includes

- Coach transportation to Seattle
- 10 nights accommodation and hotel taxes
- Flight from Seattle to Lubbock
- 10 days coach transportation in Texas and Oklahoma
- Full day tour of Slaton, Texas with local guide
- Texas Air Museum
- Tour of the Slaton Harvey House
- Slaton Museum
- National Ranching Heritage Center
- Buddy Holly Center
- American Wind Power Center
- *Texas the Musical Drama* in Palo Duro Canyon
- Route 66 sightseeing
- Roger Miller Museum
- Sandhill Curiosity Shoppe
- Oklahoma Route 66 Museum
- Locally guided tour of Oklahoma City
- American Banjo Museum
- Water Taxi Canal Tour
- National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum
- Grapevine Vintage Railroad
- Fort Worth Stockyards
- Tour of Luna's Tortilla Factory
- Old Red Museum and building tour
- Sixth Floor Museum
- Mesquite Rodeo with BBQ dinner
- Flight from Dallas to Vancouver
- Coach transportation back to interior
- Luggage handling
- Knowledgeable tour director
- **19 meals:** 9 breakfasts, 6 lunches, 4 dinners

Experience Points: Earn **70 e-points**

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The Story Behind Every Destination Has a Story

At a conference in November of 2010, we had the pleasure of meeting and listening to the key-note speaker of the event, Steve Hartman, a reporter with the CBS Evening News. For many years, Hartman ran a feature called Everyone Has a Story. He would blindly throw a dart at a map of the United States, travel to wherever the dart landed, randomly pick a name from the telephone book, and then do a story on someone in that household. His premise was that every person has interesting stories to share and these stories are news. He was right — the feature was extremely successful.

We knew that the same principle could easily be applied to destinations. Every place has a history, the people that live and work there have interesting stories to share, and there is beauty to see and engaging activities to do in almost any place. We decided that, at our annual spring travel show, we would throw a dart at a map of North America and we would commit to plan a tour to wherever the dart landed and surrounding area. We did have a few rules, like the place had to be within 100 miles of an airport, could not be in the ocean, and had to have at least 20 accommodation rooms in the area. But very few rules.

Well, the dart landed in **Slaton**, a town just outside of Lubbock in West Texas. Now West Texas is normally a place we travel through on our way to somewhere else, so we were thrilled to be able to find out what the area had to offer. And you know what? We were right — every destination does have a story, and this area has one that may be even more interesting than most. So don your cowboy hat and boots and join us to discover the stories of the settlement of the west and the rich characters who were built in this land. They are stories of determination and hardship, laughter and music, fellowship and community. Yee-haw!

Slaton, Texas

Slaton, population about 6000, is quintessential small town America at its best. It is and always has been a railroad town, although that is not all that defines her any more. In June of 2011, Slaton celebrated its 100th anniversary. The site was selected as a depot and switching station for the new Santa Fe Railroad that was plowing through the west, and the town popped up around it. Nearby Lubbock had a similar story. But when Texas Tech University was looking for a site and compared Lubbock and Slaton, they eventually settled on Lubbock, and the rest, as they say, is history. Lubbock became the major city. With a later decision by the railroad to close the Slaton depot and keep Lubbock, Slaton was poised to suffer the same fate as many of the railroad towns – extinction.

But the citizens refused to go quietly. Slaton was the site of a Harvey House, which were restaurant and refreshment stops for passenger trains along the Santa Fe Railroad. Entrepreneur Fred Harvey started the Harvey House chain in 1876, and the houses provided efficient yet elegant meals served by hostesses known as Harvey Girls, who boarded in the rooms above the restaurant. When the depot closed, the Slaton Harvey House fell into disrepair. The town refused the gift of the building and the bulldozer arrived to demolish it, but one woman stood in front of the Harvey House and said No! A citizens group was immediately formed, and two decades later, the Harvey House opened as an elegant B & B and event centre, a testament to a prosperous time.

That is the story of Slaton – passionate citizens who love their home. You can see it in their beautiful town square complete with 1809 steam Locomotive Cotton Special, relocated here by building over a mile of new track, and an excellent wall mural depicting the town history. You can read it in the recent publication of centennial stories collected by a reporter from the local paper, The Slatonite, a very youthful James Villanueva. You can feel it when visiting the thriving shops like the Slaton Bakery, the two art galleries run by a Texas Tech professor, the brand new antique mall, and Klemke's Sausage House. And the passion is catchy. Slaton is a growing town, attracting people looking for a return to a simpler life. Stores are opening, and a new radio station was just launched.

Our ambassador for our visit is Jolene Fondy, who was born and raised in Slaton and, God willing, will die here too. In her Texan drawl, she shares humorous tales of her mother, who was a Harvey Girl, and her father, who worked on the railroad. And most of all, she shares with you the story of life in Slaton, past and present. She will show us around her town and introduce us to some of the special people who live there.

Itinerary

Wednesday, May 30:

Meals: L

We travel the Coquihalla Highway west, cross the border at Sumas, then head to Renton south of Seattle for overnight at the Quality Inn.

Thursday, May 31:

Meals: B,D

We catch an early flight on Southwest Airlines to **Lubbock**, Texas, where our coach meets us and transfers us to the Embassy Suites Hotel, the finest in Lubbock, for our 3 night stay. Built in a southwest style, the hotel features a lush plant-filled atrium with pond and waterfalls, indoor pool and hot tub, and multiple comfortable seating areas. Each evening is a complimentary manager's reception and each morning is a full cooked-to-order breakfast buffet. There is time rest and refresh, and then join the group for a Welcome to Texas dinner.

Friday, June 1:

Meals: B,L

A short 15 minute drive takes us to **Slaton**, where we meet our guide for the day, Jolene, at the town square. We first visit the **Texas Air Museum**, where a group of avid pilots maintain an astonishing collection of airplanes and WWI and WWII memorabilia. They are all volunteers, and they even stage a successful air show every two years. This is their passion and their hobby. We follow the railroad tracks to the **Harvey House**, once a thriving railroad rest stop and now a beautifully restored event center and B&B. We enjoy lunch here catered by the Slaton Bakery. Heading to the town center, there are many interesting places to check out. The **Slaton Museum** houses a great collection of items that trace the town's history. The local newspaper, The Slatonite, has an exhibit of Tex Wilson Art, plus there are two art galleries. Check out the town mural, the steam engine, the Slaton Bakery, and Klemke's sausage. After a full day, we return to Lubbock.

Saturday, June 2:

Meals: B,D

Lubbock is a remarkable city. Although the area has no surface water and there are no trees native to the area, research can prove continuous habitation in the area for over 12,000 years. Located at Texas Tech University, the **National Ranching Heritage Center** is a unique museum comprised of 48 authentic dwellings and ranch structures. With a guided tour, we learn how the buildings tell the story of ranching history and customs. Next is the **Buddy Holly Center**, where art and music collide. Visit the guitar-shaped Buddy Holly Gallery, a tribute to Lubbock's famous son,

plus the Texas Musicians Hall of Fame and the Fine Arts Gallery. This afternoon, hold onto your hats at the **America Wind Power Center**, where over 90 windmills cover the history of the American windmill, a staple of this region, from the 1860s to present. This fascinating museum shows the diversity of functions, the colourful marketing campaigns, the process of erecting a windmill, and much more. Refresh back at the hotel, then enjoy an authentic Mexican meal at Ruby Tequila's.

Sunday, June 3:

Meals: B,L,D

Heading north from Lubbock, we cross the Panhandle Plains area of the state, full of farmland and small towns. Our destination is **Amarillo** located along historic Route 66, the famed ribbon of black that connected Chicago with Los Angeles. We have lunch at the Golden Light Cantina on the original route, then have time to wander the shops of the **Route 66 Historic District**. Bring your artist flare for the next stop — the one and only Cadillac Ranch. Ten Cadillacs are buried face down in a field at the same angle as the Cheops Pyramid. You have to see it to appreciate it! An early check in to our hotel, the Ashmore Inn, allows time to rest up for our fun-filled evening. First is dinner at the **Big Texan Steak Ranch**, world renowned for its 72 oz steak. If you eat it all in one hour, its free! Then we travel a short distance to Palo Duro Canyon State Park to see the spectacular outdoor musical drama, **Texas**. Set in a natural amphitheatre, the production includes horses and wagons, a cast of over 60, waterworks and fireworks, and songs and stories that are as big as Texas itself.

Monday, June 4:

Meals: B,L

Our drive takes us into the state of Oklahoma along one of the best preserved portions of **Route 66**, and our day is devoted to exploring this iconic road. Although the original roadway, with its narrow lanes and jutting curbs, has been mostly replaced by interstates, there are sections still in use. From its official beginning in 1926 through the heyday of auto travel in the 50s and 60s, the 2400 miles of Route 66 wound through 8 states and gave birth to a culture that earned it the nickname "Main Street of America". Stops today include the Giant Cross, the Leaning Water Tower, and the lovely **Oklahoma Route 66 Museum**, which walks you through decades of the road's life. Erick, OK is the home of the King of the Road himself, **Roger Miller**, and we visit a museum dedicated to his life. Also in Erick is the unique Sandhills

Curiosity Shoppe with its huge collection of Route 66 memorabilia and charismatic owners. Our destination is **Oklahoma City**, and we settle in for a three night stay at the Hampton Inn in Bricktown, a revitalized warehouse district that is now the most happening area of the city. Our rooms overlook the Redhawks' infield, Oklahoma City's Triple-A baseball team. Maybe we will be lucky enough to see a game while we are here!

Tuesday, June 5: *Meals: B,L*

Oklahoma City is an absolute delight. Building on its deep western heritage, the city has redefined herself as a hip and spirited cultural destination. With a local guide, we learn the stories and experiences that define the city and the state. For lunch, we head to Stockyard City, still the site of the world's largest live cattle auction, and the legendary **Cattlemen's Steakhouse**, established in 1910 and usually filled with working cowboys. Not often will you get to experience something as unique as the **American Banjo Museum**, dedicated to the preservation and promotion of America's native musical instrument — the banjo. Explore the two floors of galleries and tap your toes to a live performance. The rest of the day is free.

Wednesday, June 6: *Meals: B,L*

As part of the city's revitalization, a mile long canal was built to link Bricktown with the Canadian River and create a recreational and leisure area. This morning we take a narrated **Water Taxi cruise** on the canal and hear about this project and other exciting Oklahoma City initiatives. This afternoon is a special treat when we visit the **National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum**, America's premier institution of Western history, art and culture. Counted as one of the top museums in the nation, it collects, preserves and exhibits an internationally renowned collection of Western art and artifacts. After lunch and an introduction to the

facility, explore at your own pace. We will provide two transfers back to the hotel to accommodate those who want more time.

Thursday, June 7: *Meals: B*

Heading back into Texas, our destination is the huge **Dallas-Fort Worth Metroplex**. We start small with lunch in the quaint downtown main street of Grapevine, then we board the historic **Grapevine Vintage Railroad** for a 1½ hour trip on board authentic 1920s and 1930s Victorian-style coaches, reliving the glory days of train travel in the expanding west. Our destination is the **Fort Worth Stockyards**, where we have time to explore the western shops, meet a longhorn, or chat with a Texas Ranger. Then we head to north Dallas for two nights at the Crown Plaza Suites Hotel, an all-suite property with a stunning atrium.

Friday, June 8: *Meals: B,D*

Our sightseeing day around Dallas begins with a visit to **Luna's Tortilla Factory**, where we learn the story of Maria Luna, who founded the company over 80 years ago, and her family that continue her great tradition today. In the downtown historic district, we take a tour of the **Old Red Museum** and marvel at the remarkable architecture and history of this building. Looking out the upper floor windows, we see the site of the assassination of John F. Kennedy and also the School Depository Building where Lee Harvey Oswald allegedly was stationed, now the site of **The Sixth Floor Museum**. We take the audio tour of this unique exhibit to learn the myths and legends behind this monumental event. Tonight, we finish our tour in true western style — at the **Mesquite Rodeo!** Enjoy a BBQ dinner, then cheer for your favourite cowboy or girl in roping, bronc riding and barrel racing.

Saturday, June 9:

We fly with United Airlines to Vancouver, meet our coach, and travel home to the Interior.

Tour Policies

Payments: A deposit of \$200 per person is requested at the time of booking and the balance is due March 29.

Discounts: Early bookers receive \$150 discount on first 15 seats and \$75 on next 10 seats for booking early with deposit. The discount is not offered after March 29.

Cancellation Policy: Up to March 29, your tour payments will be refunded less an administrative charge of \$40 per person. From March 30 to April 27, the cancellation charge is 30% of the tour fare. After April 27, there is no refund.

Fare Changes: Changes to taxes and surcharges from airlines, and other tour suppliers can occur at any time and are beyond the control of Wells Gray Tours, therefore Wells Gray Tours reserves the right to increase fares due to such changes up until the time of departure.

Insurance: In addition to Plan 3-Comprehensive, plans are available for Trip Cancellation & Interruption only and Medical & Enhanced Coverage only. Policies can be purchased no later than at final payment.



PHOTO CREDIT The Slatonite

Activity Level: Light activity including short distances to walk and some steps.

e-points: This tour earns 70 e-points. Each time you travel on a Wells Gray tour, you earn Experience Points, or e-points. 1 e-point equals \$1. Redeem your points on select tours or accumulate enough points to earn a free tour!