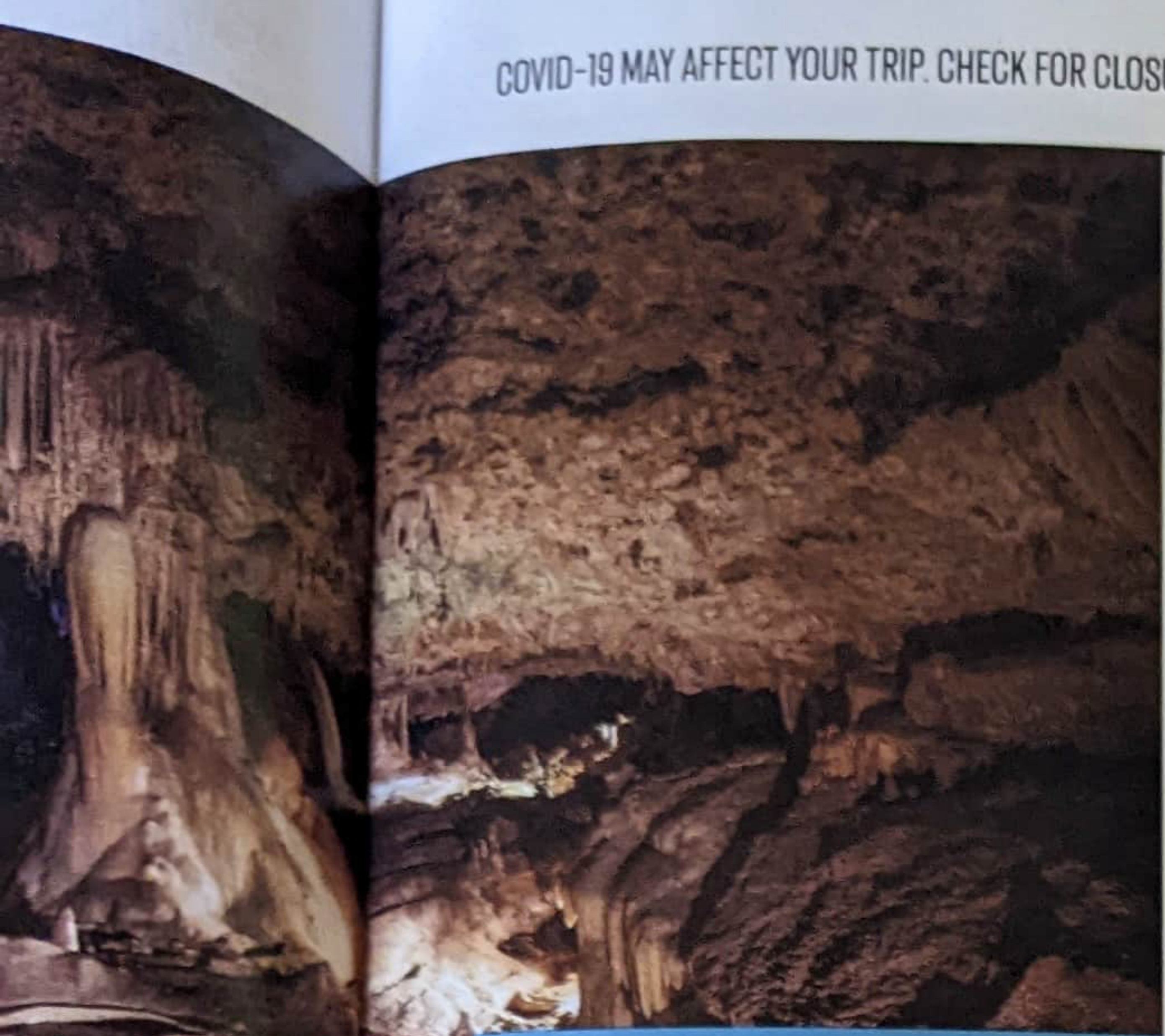


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# Getting Away in GEORGETOWN

CENTRAL TEXAS CITY OFFERS ABUNDANT OPTIONS  
FOR EXPLORING, PLAYING, EATING.

BY MELISSA GASKILL / PHOTOS BY MAEGAN LANHAM

*Clockwise from top left: Swimming at Blue Hole; Inner Space Caverns; Scurlock Farms; Monument Cafe; San Gabriel Park; 600 Degrees Pizzeria; historic courthouse square.*



**E**ast of Georgetown, a maze of narrow country roads bounded by white fences, tall trees and fields of waving grass leads to Scurlock Farms. The bustling city feels miles — and years — away. This town of roughly 75,000 residents just 25 miles north of Austin makes a great weekend getaway, and the farm will serve as a jumping-off point for my exploration of Georgetown's river and restaurants, courthouse and caves.

pecan orchard below the ridge, where the guest houses sit, to a gate and short path that leads to the San Gabriel River. We pick our way over the rugged riverbed, around several swimming holes, as she points out fossils embedded in the rock.

Then we zoom down gravel roads, past hay fields and pastures where cows graze, through thick woods, and to the horse and goat pens. Guests are welcome to feed apples and carrots to the horses and scoops of sweet feed grain the Boer-Spanish cross goats. The Scurlocks offer a true working farm experience, often giving young guests a ride on a tractor (or a hay baler, if they're baling hay) and letting them gather eggs and feed the free-range chickens. A stay at the guest house comes with muffins made with eggs from those same chickens.

## HISTORY UNEARTHED

While the farm offers plenty to occupy guests for an entire weekend, Georgetown and its environs have much to enjoy as well. Saturday morning, I join a tour of the Gault Site, west of Interstate 35 just outside Florence. Tours are offered every other month by the Williamson Museum and Gault School of Archaeological Research.

Archaeologists have known about the site since 1929, and it has yielded 600,000 Clovis-era artifacts. Human habitation here may date back 20,000 years. With excavation of the site complete, anthropologists now are working to determine the story the artifacts tell.

Tours cover how the land and resources here attracted people, the ways they lived and traded with others and the rather astonishing variety of tools they used. A sheltered, wooded valley deep into the property contains a former mammoth kill site, burned rock middens and what served as a camping spot. (The tour lasts up to three hours, and we were on our feet most of the time and occasionally in the sun, so plan accordingly.)

I get completely out of the sun and even further back in time — millions of years, in fact — at Georgetown's Inner Space Caverns. Texas boasts more caves than almost anywhere in the U.S. because the state has a lot of limestone, a great medium

A short drive down a gravel road leads to the farm's two guest houses, Rocky Overlook and my home for the weekend, the Palette Pad. It served as an art studio for Pauline Thweatt, who painted Texas landscapes under the name C.P. Montague. (The artist felt her last name was too hard to pronounce, says daughter Sheron Scurlock.)

Montague's work was featured in galleries all over the state, and President Lyndon Johnson owned several of her paintings. Pauline and her husband, Bill, built both structures, selecting every rock used in the interior and exterior from the nearby San Gabriel River and laying them by hand. Two walls of floor-to-ceiling windows that once provided light for the artist now provide me with a view of stately oak trees and several bird feeders.

Scurlock is the oldest of the Thweatt's five children and current owner of the farm with her husband, Dan. The couple built their own home on the property in 1971 and raised two sons here. She gives me a lively tour of the farm, steering a four-wheeler to a sprawling