# DAY TRIP TO TERLINGUA

From Alpine · Brewster County, Texas

OTHER MINING AND OIL

Photo: Blair Pittman, Wikimedia Commons, Public domain

**LIVING TOWN**

A small living town grown into the ruins. The ghost town area, its cemetery and its businesses are open to visitors.

Terlingua is a long day from Alpine: about two hours each way on TX 118. Walk the ruins and the cemetery in the afternoon light and stay for dinner at the Starlight Theatre, which opens at 5 p.m. Big Bend National Park is next door if you want to stay the night instead.

## A SAMPLE DAY

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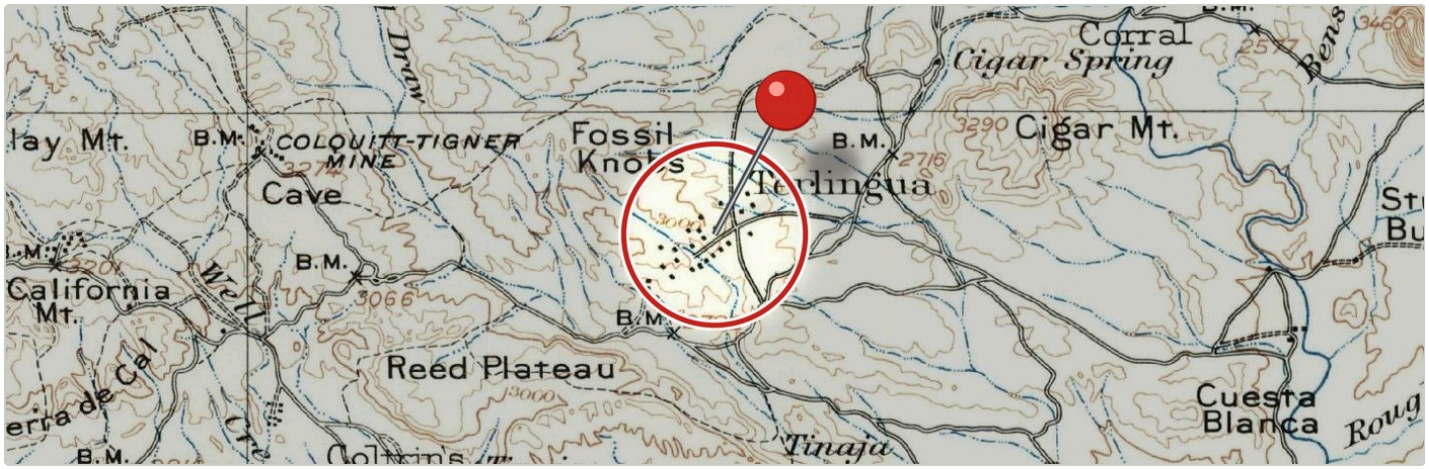
|---|---|---|
| ☐ | Morning | Leave Alpine and drive south on TX 118, about two hours. |
| ☐ | **Midday** | Walk the ghost town: the stone houses, St. Agnes Church ruins and the views to the Chisos Mountains. |
| ☐ | Afternoon | Visit the cemetery, then browse the Trading Company. |
| ☐ | **5 p.m.** | The Starlight Theatre opens for dinner. |
| ☐ | Evening | Drive back to Alpine after dark, or stay nearby. |

Coming from El Paso, it's about six hours each way. Make it an overnight.

## WHAT TO PHOTOGRAPH

- **The cemetery.** Rock-piled graves and handmade crosses against the desert. Late light gives the crosses long shadows.
- **Stone houses.** The roofless limestone houses frame the mountains through their window and door openings.
- **St. Agnes Church.** The ruined mission sits among the houses; shoot it from below with the slope behind.
- **Día de los Muertos.** On November 2 the cemetery fills with candles and offerings. Be respectful, and ask before photographing people.




USGS topographic map, 1903 (public domain). The ring and pin mark the town.

## DAY TRIP ESSENTIALS

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|---|---|
| DRIVE | 83 mi, about 2 h 04 min each way from downtown Alpine. From El Paso: 303 mi, about 5 h 54 min. |
| OPEN | The ruins and cemetery have no posted hours. The Starlight Theatre opens daily at 5 p.m., until midnight, or 1 a.m. on Saturdays. |
| ADMISSION | We found no admission charge for the ghost town area or the cemetery. |
| FOOD | The Starlight Theatre is a restaurant and bar with live entertainment. It takes reservations only for groups of 10 or more. |
| SHOPPING | The Terlingua Trading Company, the town gift shop, sells local art, jewelry and books. |
| CEMETERY | The cemetery is still in use. Walk around the graves, not over them, and leave the offerings where they are. |
| FUEL AND WATER | Fill up in Alpine. It's 83 miles to Terlingua on a road with few services. |

## BEFORE YOU GO

- Check the status with the land manager before you go; conditions change.
- Stay out of mine shafts, tunnels and unstable buildings.
- Leave artifacts where they lie. Removing them can be a crime.
- Carry water, a paper map and a charged phone; signal is often poor.

**Coordinates** 29.32159, −103.61603 · 29°19′18″N 103°36′58″W

**Directions** Google Maps

**Full guide** abandonedtowns.com/texas/terlingua/

Details checked October 2026. Hours, prices and access change: confirm before you go.