

TOP 10



places to be in SE Texas



1. SESAME STREET LIVE
Bring the children out for a night of fun in Beaumont's Ford Arena for the production of "Elmo Grows Up." From Friday through Sunday, April 11-13, Abby Cadabby, the newest Muppet on Sesame Street joins Elmo, Zoe, Rosita and all her furry and feathered friends in asking "What do you want to be when you grow up?" as they prepare for a pageant on Sesame Street.

2. MAURICEVILLE CRAWFISH FESTIVAL
It's that time of year again — time to travel to the Mauriceville Fairgrounds on Texas 62 for a heaping plateful of succulent Southeast Texas mudbugs. Enjoy the tasty crustaceans, music, dancing, games, carnival rides and craft booths during the Mauriceville Crawfish Festival. One taste, and you'll know why the folks in Mauriceville claim their little city to be the crawfish capital of the world.

3. MERCADO DAYS
From tacos to low riders to carnival rides, arts and crafts, and a queen's pageant, there's something for everyone to enjoy at Mercado Days Festival in downtown Port Arthur. Mercado Days, or Market Days, is a multi-cultural festival promoting a positive atmosphere in conjunction with the Southeast Texas Hispanic-Cultural and Educational Center.

4. EARTH WEEK AT SHANGRI LA
Celebrate nature at beautiful Shangri La Botanical and Nature Center during Earth Week, April 20-26. Visitors can take a scenic boat trip down the bayou, take a bird walk, or for those a bit more energetic — a nature hike. Greenhouse tours are available and lectures with guest speakers. These activities are provided free of charge by the Nelda C. and H.J. Lutchter Stark Foundation.

5. CAJUN HERITAGE FESTIVAL
Celebrate Cajun Culture in Orange during the Texas Cajun Heritage Festival this May. Don't be afraid of the calories when sampling festival fare at its finest: a rich gumbo roux, jambalaya, or crawfish etoufee — there's plenty of chances to dance away the extra pounds on the dance floor. Whether it's the two-step, waltz or a Cajun jig, live bands playing traditional Cajun and Zydeco music will lure festival-goers to the dance floor.

6. YMBL RODEO
Saddle up and ride on out to Ford Park in May for the annual YMBL Rodeo. Sanctioned by the Professional Rodeo Cowboys Association, there's plenty of thrills, spills and action in the arena as top-ranked cowboys compete for prize money. Events include bullriding, steer wrestling, tie down roping, saddle bronc, bareback riding and team roping.

7. SALT FISHING RODEO
Cast a line for a weekend of outdoor activity this May at Pleasure Island where the annual SALT Fishing Rodeo tournament is scheduled. This will be the 34th year for the tournament with three offshore divisions, and five inshore divisions with different categories of fish caught. Prizes given for top weigh-ins and other prizes.

8. RIVERFEST & THUNDER ON NECHES
Pack up the family and come on out to the banks of Neches River where four days of fun are scheduled for the first weekend in May. At Port Neches Park in Port Neches, the annual RiverFest and Thunder on the Neches offers something for everyone. From professional tunnel boat races to carnival rides, food and arts and crafts booths to live entertainment and tournaments and contests, the festival features a variety of events, and is growing in popularity every year.

9. JAZZ FEST
For an up-tempo time, blow into the Pavilion in downtown Port Arthur this June, where Southeast Texas' rich musical heritage will be showcased during the Jazz Fest. The day of musical entertainment also features activities for children, and is sponsored by the St. Paul United Methodist Church and city of Port Arthur.

10. BOOMTOWN FILM & MUSIC FEST
Why drive out of town for the best in film and musical talent. In June, the 2008 Boomtown Film and Music Festival takes centerstage at the Art Studio, The Art Museum of Southeast Texas, The Beaumont Civic Center, Riverfront Park, and the Jefferson Theatre and Crockett Street.