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**RELEASE**

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**NEWS**

### **The Alamo Nominated for Inclusion on UNESCO's World Heritage List Decision Expected July 2015**

Five Spanish colonial missions, including the world-famous Alamo, are currently nominated for inclusion on the World Heritage List with a decision expected July 3-5, 2015. Located in the heart of San Antonio, Texas, these Spanish colonial missions are of particular importance. San Antonio's Spanish colonial missions symbolize a time when the world was expanding, cultures were intertwining and the global landscape would be forever changed. Having an intact, architectural representation of this story is a global treasure. If inscribed on the list by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), this substantially complete system of missions including architecture, archaeological and landscape features would join the ranks of Stonehenge, the Great Wall of China and the Gizeh Pyramid of Egypt.

#### **History of the Missions**

As the largest collection of Spanish colonial architecture in North America, Mission Concepción, Mission San José, Mission San Juan, Mission Espada and Mission San Antonio de Valero (the Alamo) were built in the early 1700s to convert Native Americans to Christianity and help settle this region under the flag of Spain.

Straddling either side of the spring-fed San Antonio River, the five missions are uniquely close to one another, spanning just over 7 miles. They survived for decades, creating a unique culture that blended native traditions with newly adopted Spanish ways. In years since, they have been under the rule of Mexico, the Republic of Texas and, finally, the United States.

These communities have built the foundation for Texas' iconic history and heritage, providing a unique experience in the United States. Communally, the missions have shaped the personality of San Antonio, now the nation's seventh-largest city. This melting pot of Latino, Native and Western cultures can trace its heritage to the collaboration of Spaniards and Native Americans across the Texas landscape.

## **The Mission Experience Today**

As protected historic sites, the missions host millions of visitors each year. All, except the Alamo, are still active Catholic parishes that serve surrounding communities and, in some cases, the descendents of the original people served by the missions.

Whether a patron is interested in attending a mariachi mass, hiking from mission to mission or simply enjoying a self-guided tour, there are many ways to immerse oneself in the days and influences of colonial Spain.

- ***On the River Walk***  
The missions are now linked by the newly expanded River Walk, a network of garden-bordered paths along the San Antonio River that connect much of the city's history with hotels, restaurants, theaters and more. This offers patrons the opportunity to **hike or bike** from mission to mission as well as kayak certain sections of the river.
- ***A Tour 300 Years in the Making***  
With their limestone facades and picturesque bell towers, the missions bring to life a bygone era. All are open to the public free of charge. Tours allow visitors to walk the grounds where lives were lived and lost. From living quarters to churches, centuries-old stories echo through these stone facades and their surroundings, including the Espada Aqueduct, still in use today.
- ***Museum & Award-Winning Film***  
Mission San José, often referred to as the "Queen of the Missions," provides an ideal starting point. Its museum exhibits artifacts that explain the diverse tasks found within the Spanish missions. An on-site theater shows the award-winning film, "*Gente de Razón*," every half hour. It tells the story of the native people of 18th-century South Texas, their role in colonizing New Spain and the impact of the Spanish missions.
- ***Reliving the Story of the Alamo***  
The famed Alamo offers its iconic shrine, Long Barracks Museum, audio tours, numerous historic buildings and gift shop. Living history demonstrations and battle reenactments also play vital roles in the educational offerings of the modern-day Alamo.

The San Antonio Convention & Visitors Bureau is available to provide you with all the resources needed to cover the designation this July. You will be notified as soon as the designation process is complete; meanwhile images, b-roll, media releases, vital links and possible interviews are available at [www.WorldHeritageSA.com](http://www.WorldHeritageSA.com). To learn more about San Antonio's historic missions or to plan a San Antonio getaway, visitors can log onto [www.visitsanantonio.com](http://www.visitsanantonio.com).