

# SELF GUIDED RIDE SUGGESTIONS

The Fort Worth Stock yards are 28 miles from the Convention Center. It will take you about 40 minutes to reach the Stock Yards.

As a drover headed cattle up the Chisholm Trail to the railheads, he had one last stop for rest and supplies: Fort Worth, Texas. Beyond Fort Worth, he'd be crossing the Red River into Indian Territory. Between 1866 and 1890, drovers trailed more than four million head of cattle through Fort Worth. The city soon became known as "Cowtown."

When the railroad arrived in 1876, Fort Worth became a major shipping point for livestock, so the city built the Union Stockyards, two and a half miles north of the Tarrant County Courthouse, in 1887. But the Union Stockyards Company lacked the funds to buy enough cattle to attract local ranchers, so President Mike C. Hurley invited wealthy Boston capitalist Greenleif Simpson to Fort Worth in hopes he would invest.

Simpson arrived and found the pens full of cattle; he decided Fort Worth represented a good market, and made plans to invest. Little did he know, the pens didn't normally hold that much cattle; he'd simply arrived on the heels of heavy rains and a railroad strike. On April 27, 1893, Simpson bought the Union Stockyards for \$133,333.33 and changed the name to the Fort Worth Stockyards Company.

Simpson invited other investors to join him, including his Boston neighbor, Louville V. Niles, whose primary business was meatpacking. They soon realized that instead of shipping the cattle off to other markets to be processed, they'd be much better off building meat packing plants nearby so they could keep the business in the city. The investors began working to attract major packers to Fort Worth, and by about 1900, they had persuaded both Armour & Co. and Swift & Co. to build plants near the Stockyards.

The businessmen planned construction – by coin toss. Armour and Swift held a coin toss to decide who would get which tract of land. Armour won the toss and chose the northern site; construction began in 1902. However, Swift & Co. ended up getting the better end of the bargain with the southern site, which contained a large gravel pit that they used for the construction of their plant. They even sold some of the gravel to Armour.

That same year, construction started on the pens, the barns, and the new Livestock Exchange Building, which housed the many livestock commission companies, telegraph offices, railroad offices and other support businesses. It became known as "The Wall Street of the West."

The success of the Stockyards meant the area needed an indoor show facility. In 1907, construction began on a grand coliseum – now known as the Cowtown Coliseum – that was completed in just 88 working days, in time for the grand opening of the Feeders & Breeders Show. The Coliseum became the home of the first indoor rodeo.

The Texas Longhorn and the American cowboy are two of the most enduring symbols of the Old West. They're a big reason why Fort Worth earned the nickname "Cowtown." And they formed the core of the great cattle drives of the late nineteenth century. Now, the romance and mystique of cowboys and cattle drives returns to Fort Worth with The Herd - Texas Longhorns driven by genuine Texas cowhands - offering an unforgettable glimpse into the past. You'll hear the jingle of spurs, the cattle bawling, and the rhythm of the hoof beats. As The Herd passes, a bygone era comes to life before your eyes every day at 11:30 AM & 4:00 PM.



On your visit to the Ft Worth Stock Yards I might suggest stopping into Billy Bob's. Try your hand at a little mechanical Bull riding, enjoy some real Bull Riding shows. Try a little boot scooting on one of the largest dance floors around. If Billy Bob's is not your style you can always visit the Stockyards Museum, or the Cowboy Hall of Fame. There is so much to see and do around the stockyards you will lose track of time and become lost in the adventure.

## 1980 - An Idea Is Born

In 1980, at the height of the Urban Cowboy craze, the idea for Billy Bob's Texas was born. Billy Bob Barnett and Spencer Taylor plotted what to do with a 100,000-square-foot department store that was closed and for sale. Barnett knew that the authenticity of the Stockyards and the size of the space would lend itself well to a nightclub. They hired a crew of 80 and set to work. Billy Bob was hesitant to make a commitment about when the club would open. He set the date for April 1, 1981. A fallback plan, if everything fell through, would be "April Fools!"



Originally, the idea was to capitalize on the popularity of local musician Jerry Max Lane by naming the club "Jerry Max's Texas," but when legal barriers of licensing that name began to surface, Billy Bob added his own namesake to the club and "Billy Bob's Texas" was born. The building was originally built in 1910. At that time it was an open-air barn used to house prize cattle for the Fort Worth Stock Show. In 1936, as a Texas Centennial Project, the building was enclosed by the City of Fort Worth at a cost of \$183,500 and the tower over the main entrance was added. The "new" structure contained 1,257 animal stalls, and a 1,200 seat auction ring that is now the Billy Bob's Bull Riding arena. Livestock events were held here until the stock show moved to the Will Rogers Memorial Complex, in 1943. During World War II, the building was used as an airplane factory for the Globe Aircraft Corporation. In the 1950's the building became a department store so large that the stock boys wore roller skates to make their jobs easier.

The admission prices to Billy Bob's vary during the week based on special events, but the typical admission prices are as follows: Sunday -Tuesday: \$2 admission till close (excluding special events) Wednesday & Thursday: \$2 before 7 pm, \$5 after 7 pm (excluding special events) Friday & Saturday: \$2 before 5 pm. Friday and Saturday night pricing varies; call for specific pricing on the scheduled entertainment or check the [Concert Calendar Page](#) for general admission and reserved seating prices. If concert ends before midnight, \$5 admission after the concert is over till close. NOTE: Billy Bob's is closed from 5-6 pm every Friday and Saturday night to prepare concerts. Live Bull Riding on Friday & Saturday night is an additional \$4 and is not included with the concert admission price. Tickets to Live Bull Riding can be purchased 30 minutes prior to each performance; show times for both nights are at 9 pm and 10 pm.

