



Take Ranch to Market Road 2810, also known as Pinto Canyon Road, out of Marfa to experience the quiet beauty of the vast, West Texas landscape. You'll be surrounded by the Chinati Mountains (see back page). Big skies and endless geology surrounds you on this memorable drive. The first 30 miles or so are paved, but then abruptly turn into a dirt road. The next miles are bumpy and scenic, and take you to the Rio Grande. You'll want a high clearance vehicle for this trip. You won't find many amenities in this unspoiled part of West Texas, so go with a full tank, good tires, and water.

New York Times travel writer Seth Kugel tells of his trip on this route. "I made the fortuitous decision to bypass U.S. 67—the direct route to Presidio— and instead take the prettier and virtually unused Ranch Road 2810, a 44-mile strip of asphalt through dramatic emptiness that eventually turns into 10 miles of dirt road, weaving through cowboy-movie scenery of parched hills the color of toasted sand and blue skies with wispy clouds hanging along the horizon."



STOP 1 Chinati Hot Springs

The waters of Chinati Hot Springs have long been a traveler's destination because of their restorative properties. The pool's mineral-rich water stays at a constant 100 degrees, and is believed to possess healing abilities.

Local Hispanics use the word "Chinati" to describe the grackle, using the bird's early arrival in the spring as a sign of an early warm weather. Apaches say the name "Chinati" is derived from the Apache word *ch'ina'itih*, meaning mountain pass.



The resort was built in the 1930s. The oasis attracts a wide variety of rare birds, offering the avian life the variety of habitats from deep remote canyons to green riparian corridors lined with cottonwoods.

You'll want to call ahead and get a reservation so you'll have a room for changing and you'll have your chance to enjoy the waters secured. Take Hot Springs Road about a half mile outside of Ruidosa to Chinati Hot Spring's gate.

STOP 2 Presidio

Presidio is a place of history and natural beauty. Archaeologists have found traces of dinosaurs roaming the region more than 100 million years ago and thriving human settlements more than 1,500 years before Christ. The Spanish explorer Cabeza de Vaca arrived in this area in 1535. The late 19th century featured occasional Comanche raids and the threat of Mexican bandits.

Marvels abound, from the ghostly Chinati Mountains to the panoramic vistas of Big Bend Ranch State Park. Many visitors enjoy exploring the outdoors by car, motorcycle or river raft.

The town, itself, boasts comfortable hotels, delightful restaurants and outstanding shopping both in town and across the bridge in Ojinga, Mexico.

"Presidio, a sign says "Welcome to the Real Frontier," which could refer to both the town's formidable history (people have been living and farming around here for 3,500 years, and the modern city was originally a fort established in 1683) and its recent dramas as the fastest-growing community in Texas."



STOP 3 Fort Leaton



Stop at Fort Leaton State Historic Site for a glimpse of the area's cultural history. The original adobe structure was a private residence dating back to the early 19th century. Fort Leaton was established in 1848 as a border trading post by former Indian

hunter Benjamin Leaton. The massive adobe fortress protected his family and employees from Indian raids.



The Chinati Mountains are a small range that you will see on this drive. The mountains elevations varies from 4,605 to 7,728 feet above sea level. The highest point in the range is Chinati Peak, with an elevation of 7,728 feet (2,355 m). The peak's dome-shaped hump can be seen rising prominently in the distance to the southwest from US 90 between Van Horn and Marfa. The elliptically-shaped Chinati Peak runs from northwest to southeast for fourteen miles. Chinati Peak is encircled by jagged desert peaks and rugged canyons. You'll be going through a pass Ranch to Market Road 2810. The mountains are primarily composed of igneous and metamorphic rocks, and are believed to be the remains of a number of explosive volcanic caldera-building events in the remote past. There are some large quartz monzonite intrusion domes on the west side of the caldera and many dikes of peralkaline rhyolite on the north side of the caldera.



Venomous snakes, scorpions, spiders, and centipedes are active during warm months. Four species of rattlesnake live in this part of Texas—the Western Diamondback, Black-tailed, Mojave, and Rock rattlesnakes. As scary as they are, they play an important role in controlling rodent populations—many of which are pests or spread disease.

The rattle of a rattler is a buzz that is unmistakable, and once learned, will stop you in your tracks. And this is a good thing, as rattlesnakes use this sound as a warning when they perceive a threat; continue toward them, and you risk provoking a self-defensive bite. If bitten, seek medical attention promptly, as permanent damage can occur within 12 hours of a bite.

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A ONE-DAY EXCURSION FROM
MARFA
TO THE SOUTH
PINTO CANYON BY RM 2810



Marfa

Candelaria

STOP 1
Chinati
Hot Springs

Ruidosa

Chinati Mountains

Cibola Creek
Guest Ranch

Shafter

Cienega Mountains

MEXICO

Ojinaga

STOP 2
Presidio

STOP 3
Fort Leaton
State Historic Site

NOTE: This road is unpaved after 35 miles.

RYAN
FLAT

90

FOURMILE DRAW

Chinati
Foundation

Rancheria
Hills

67

BIG
TRESTLE
DRAW

LONG DRAW

90
67

Tinaja

169

WILD
HORSE
DRAW

CUESTA DEL BURRO

BLACK HILLS

FRENCHMAN HILLS

DUNTON FLAT

Rio
Grande

TACO CANYON

MANANILLO CANYON

LAVA CANYON

BOFECILLOS CANYON