

How to get to Cuatro Ciénegas Scientific Research Station (CICC)

The drive from Austin to Cuatro Ciénegas is about 400 miles (8 hours), not counting the variable amount of time you will have to spend crossing the border and getting your visa and vehicle importation permits (30 minutes to 2-3 hours if you're really unlucky). All lines that begin with brackets are extra information or deviations from the direct directions. If you'd like to keep track of mileages, we include trip odometer readings that start at **our mile zero** on I-35 at the junction of Hwy 290 (Ben White) in south Austin. Please keep in mind that all mileages are **approximate** and **rounded to the full mile**, and may be off from your odometer up to ten percent depending on the accuracy of your odometer, size of your tires and any deviations you make from the direct directions.

No.	Approx. Mileage	Directions
1	0.0	From Austin - head south on I-35 (which passes alongside downtown) toward San Antonio. Start trip odometer counter at I-35 and Hwy 290 junction.
2	[64]	[If going to the San Antonio airport to pick up people, take Loop 410 W (Exit #166), and then backtrack to I-35 and resume directions below.]
3		Unless traffic is heavy as you come into San Antonio (see #4), stay on I-35 all the way through the center of the city, always following signs for Laredo.
4	[67]	[If traffic is really heavy in San Antonio, consider taking Loop 410 S off of I-35 (Left Exit # 163) which skirts most of the city and connects back to I-35 S at our direct mile 85, and factor in subsequent mileage accordingly].
5		There is a long stretch of traveling with no restaurants, so if you're hungry we advise getting a bite to eat at one of the fast food places off of Exit #122 at Devine.
6	119	Take Exit #111 onto Hwy 57 toward Eagle Pass (EP)/ Piedras Negras (PN). It's a 98-mile long, straight road through Batesville (at mile 157 there's a good TexMex restaurant called Yomi's on the left) and La Pryor that heads you toward EP/PN.
7	215	At the first light in EP, turn right at the 'T' onto 57S/ 277N.
8	[216]	[A few lights down on the right is an HEB. This is usually the cheapest place to buy gas and folks can get groceries, pharmacy items, etc. there.]
9		Continue on Hwy 57 (from HEB, the road immediately curves to the left in front of some fast food places), following signs to the border.
10	215	Pass the railroad bridge and immediately turn left at the light to cross the border via "Bridge 2" (sign says to "El Indio" and "Crossing for trucks", but cars can use it too). The Bridge 2 crossing is preferable because it will allow you to skirt downtown Piedras Negras, saving time and probable confusion.
11		Go straight past Bliss Street to bridge crossing. The bridge entrance is pretty well signed, but there are a few twists and turns along the way.
12		Pay the bridge toll (~US \$2.50 as of March/2008), and then pick the green "Nada que declarar/ Nothing to declare" lanes (if in fact you have nothing to declare to Customs as is most likely the case).
13	Welcome to Mexico!	Continue straight on the main road (Hwy 57), and follow signs to Sabinas, Monclova and/or Saltillo anywhere you're given a choice.
14	219	You'll pass a gas station a little ways down this road and want to bear left at the fork in the road where you'll see a statue of a man on a horse. Turn left at the light and take that road under the tracks.
15	222	Turn right at the stop sign.
16	223	At the next light, with a large PEMEX station on the left, turn left and you're on the main road out of town (Hwy 57). Outside of town a ways you'll pass the coal-fired power plants on the left.
17	256	Continue past Allende to the Aduana (Customs) stop at "Km 53".
18		[Even if you obtained your tourist visa or vehicle permits at a Mexican Consulate prior to entering Mexico, you will have to stop here and get it stamped or purchase your tourist visa (free if staying less than one week) and vehicle permit for the

		requested time, no longer than 6 months. Make sure to stop here again on your way out of Mexico to turn in your visa and vehicle permits. If you forget or chose not to do this, they will expire and you may have trouble importing another vehicle again if the old ones were never cancelled.]
19		Continue through the checkpoint in the “Nada que declarar/ Nothing to declare” lanes if you have nothing to declare. Hopefully you’ll get a green light, but pull over for inspection if you get a red light.
20	257	Immediately leaving the Aduana checkpoint, take the left fork marked "cuota," and pay the toll (MX \$76 pesos when last checked in March/08, but can also pay in US dollars). The right fork is a free road and will get you to the same place, but the toll is worth it for the safer and quicker route it provides.
21	288	The toll road ends with signs to Sabinas. Take the left lane fork to go to Sabinas/Monclova, but be careful taking the unusual and abrupt 270 degree turn to the right to get you headed that way.
22		Continue straight through the suburbs of Sabinas (watch out for the speed bumps and cops).
23	294	You’ll pass a PEMEX station on the right (with clean bathrooms and munchies)
24	294	Turn right immediately past the Hotel Hacienda Real on the right onto Hwy 57, following the sign to Monclova.
25		You’ll continue on the long, good highway to Monclova past Menonite farms on the left and through Hermanas
26	341	There’s another PEMEX gas station
27	362	Just as you are starting to enter Monclova traveling through scattered mostly industrial and agricultural buildings, watch for an unusual, tall blue-green obelisk-like statue on your right at the fork where you want to go right toward ‘Torreon’ (there’s another sign saying go straight to ‘Monclova’ on Hwy 57, you don’t want to do that). If you miss that turn (not hard to do), you’ll immediately know you did if you see an OXXO gas station and convenience store on your left and suddenly find yourself in what is clearly Monclova (i.e. more densely developed city).
28	364	After getting on the turn toward Torreon/Salttillo, you’ll cross railroad tracks and a Takata building and PEMEX station (mile 352.2) on your right.
29	366	The road curves to the left and you’ll see another large Takata industrial building on the left, and approach a freeway-like interchange.
30	366	Turn right before going under the overpass (you’ll see signs to San Pedro and Cuatro Ciénegas). You’ll pass the Monclova airport on your left (hard to see at night) as you head toward the next town of San Buenaventura.
31	374	After entering San Buenaventura (with lots of speed bumps), turn left onto Hwy 30 toward Cuatro Ciénegas (there will be lots of big signs) just past a PEMEX/ OXXO gas station and convenience store on the right.
32	376	Continue through the outskirts of town past the lion statue, and straight (don’t follow the sign to Nadadores pointing to the right) out of town toward Cuatro Ciénegas (signs in this area will now say Cuatro Ciénegas, San Pedro, Torreón, etc.).
33	378	Very shortly you’ll pass through the small town of Nadadores. This last stretch of highway to Cuatro Ciénegas has been under construction for months and is currently very narrow, dark and curvy, so please drive carefully. Always continue on the main road Hwy 30
34	385	Go slow through the canyon where you don’t want to go off the curvy road and ignite all the Arundo in the bottom along the Río Salado de los Nadadores.
35	389	You’ll pass through the town of Sacramento.
36	410	Just before entering Cuatro Ciénegas, you’ll have to pass through a military checkpoint. They may or may not want to check your vehicle, but are usually pretty friendly.
37		After the check point you will pass the airport on your right, the playground (left) below the statue of Presidente Carranza on horseback, and enter Cuatrociénegas. Development is a bit sparse at as you pass the police station and fairgrounds on your

		right, then the clinic and the Hotel Santa Fe and Mini Super on the corner. Do not turn left toward Torreón / San Pedro, but continue straight. Counting the cross street at the Mini Super continue straight into town to turn right at the 6 th street, which is just past the Paletería (ice cream store with pink elephant trash can) on your left in mid-block.
38	411	Turn right (North) on this 6 th street, Zaragoza, which is one-way northbound on the east side of the main town plaza (if you miss the turn and enter the plaza, make left turns to circumnavigate the plaza. Note that all streets bounding the plaza and within a one- to two-block radius of the plaza are one way).
39		Turn left at the second cross street (Calle Iturbide), 2 blocks North of the plaza.
40		In one block turn a left on Calle Presidente Carranza (one way southbound), which points you back in the direction of the main plaza.
42	Congrats, you made it to CICC!	The Scientific Research Station of Cuatrociénegas (CICC) will be on your left at about mid-block (Presidente Carranza #204). The office entrance has a brown door and sign above it, and the house entrance has a green door and is exactly one door over to the right. Street-side parking is usually available in front of CICC, or at least nearby.