What better way to learn about our springs than to visit them! Hike to most, but Cold Spring is on Lady Bird Lake, just a canoe ride west of Mopac. So, pick a beautiful day and watch for water springing out of the ground.

1. Spider Spring: Spider Spring discharges from 6 or more openings in the fern-covered tufa mound at the head of a tributary. Tufa is a spongy, porous variety of limestone, formed by the precipitation of calcium carbonate from the evaporation of calcium-rich groundwater. The spring discharges where the Comanche Peak Formation and Edwards Formation meet.

From Hwy 183, go west on Spicewood Springs Rd. Turn on to Rustic Rock Rd, to Tanglewood Park. From the parking lot, head southeast on the sidewalk trail crossing over a foot bridge. Stay on the main nature trail till you (approximately 400') until the trail splits. Take the trail to the right along a tributary to reach the spring.

2. Hearth Spring: Located in the Northern Segment of the Edwards Aquifer, the spring derives its name from its limestone ledge that looks like a stone fireplace.

From Hwy 183, take the Balcones Woods exit. Go west Balcones Wood Dr, changing names to Floral Park Dr. At the bottom of the hill, park on the road at trail head. Follow the trail north 200 ft. to the second creek crossing. The spring is 500 ft. upstream.

3. Seiders Spring: Discharges from the Buda Stone formation on the east side of Shoal Creek between 35th and 38th Streets. It is the most visible of several springs along this reach of the creek. As recently as the 1960’s this area was a popular swimming hole. Source of water to this spring is unknown but likely includes the developed areas eastward toward Lamar and Guadalupe Streets.

From Mopac, go east on 35th Street. Veer right before Seton Hospital as 35th street becomes 34th. Take a quick right on Shoal Creek Blvd. and park. The spring will be located on the northeast side of Shoal Creek.

4. Oak Spring: Discharges into a small tributary of Boggy Creek. The park surrounding the spring was purchased in 2009 to protect this historic site. It is one of many springs that discharges from the ancient gravels of the Colorado River and is now perched high above the current river channel.

From I-35 go east on Rosewood, turning into Oak Springs Dr. The spring in the vicinity of the northwest corner of Airport Blvd, and Oak Springs Dr.

5. Cold Spring: Discharges into Lady Bird Lake between Mopac and Red Bud Isle. The spring is regularly visited by canoe and kayak paddlers. The source of water to the spring includes Eanes Creek, the Rollingwood area, Barton Creek upstream of Loop 360, and Williamson Creek. Ancient spring outlets can be seen in the cliff walls nearby.

Paddle on Lady Bird Lake a half mile west of Mopac Bridge or a half mile east of Red Bud Isle; spring is on the south shoreline.

6. Barton Springs: Is actually made up of four primary springs outlets in Zilker Park in central Austin. Source water for all four springs is the Barton Springs Segment of the Edwards Aquifer reaching as far south as Onion Creek and under drought conditions, the Blanco River.

From Mopac, go east on Barton Springs Road. For Parthenia, Eliza and Upper Barton follow signs to Barton Springs Pool. For Old Mill (Sunken Garden) go south on Robert E. Lee, enter Lady Bird Lake Trail.

a. Parthenia, the main spring, discharges directly into Barton Springs Pool. Water is visible discharging from the fault (crack) on the south side of the pool upstream of the diving board. For the more adventurous, dive down to feel water discharging from the small caves at the bottom of the pool.

b. Eliza Spring, south of the Zilker Zephyr Miniature Train Station, is closed to the public to protect the endangered Barton Springs Salamanders, but water is visible welling up through holes cut through the floor of the amphitheater. The Elk Club used this amphitheater for their meetings because the cool waters of the springs helped combat the summer heat.

c. Old Mill Spring (Sunken Garden), also called Zenobia Spring, is on the south side of Barton Creek downstream of the pool. This spring is also closed off to the public but features pretty limestone walls.

d. Upper Barton Spring discharges into Barton Creek from the south bank about 300' upstream of the pool and is the only spring site in this complex that is physically unaltered.

7. Blunn Spring: Discharges into Blunn Creek within the Blunn Creek Nature Preserve. The spring helps provide baseflow, or a constant flow of water, to Blunn Creek. Source area for this spring likely includes the uplands near Travis High School.

From I-35 exit at Woodward St., go west on St. Edwards Dr. to the Blunn Creek Preserve East Trail. From the East Trail, take the first trail on the left to the spring.

8. Backdoor Spring: Discharges from the Barton Springs Segment of the Edwards Aquifer on the southwest side of Barton Creek. It is located along the greenbelt at the downstream end of the popular Sculptured Falls swimming hole. Backdoor is a fairy tale spring with water discharging from a crack in the rock. Backdoor Cave which is a few feet away is probably an old spring outlet and offers a glimpse of the underground cave networks that feed water through the Edwards Aquifer.

From Capital of Texas Hwy., enter Barton Creek Wilderness Preserve below the Mopac overpass and follow creek west 1.5 miles to permanent pool at Sculptured Falls. Spring is on the left.