

THINGS TO DO IN AND NEAR TUCSON

The beauty of the Sonoran Desert is what first pulls many to Tucson, but they're often surprised at how verdant and diverse a living desert can be as they learn about our unique ecosystems at Tohono Chul, Tucson Botanical Gardens, and Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum.

Off the beaten path, you can explore the wide-open wonder of the American Southwest up-close and unrestrained, hiking the mountain ranges that circle the Old Pueblo or wandering wilderness preserves and parks, from the cascades of Seven Falls at Sabino Canyon to the majestic cacti of Saguaro National Parks East & West, or from the high-pine and aspen forests of Mt. Lemmon to the cool, otherworldly depths of Colossal Cave Mountain Park or Kartchner Caverns State Park.

Probe the cosmos at Kitt Peak National Observatory and the Fred Lawrence Whipple Observatory. Feed your spirit in the city's museums and galleries, or travel through time discovering Tucson's unique cultural legacy, from the collision of Spanish and Tohono O'odham cultures in the art and architecture of Mission San Xavier del Bac to 300 vintage-to-modern aircraft illuminating a century of military and aerospace history at the Pima Air & Space Museum.

You can hop the 3.9-mile Sun Link Tucson Streetcar and roll your way through the heart of Tucson, from Main Gate Square at the University of Arizona, along Fourth Avenue, and across Downtown Tucson to Mercado San Agustin and back. Step off and on at streetcar stops to explore shops and restaurants, ranging from funky to elegant, but always memorable.

Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum: <http://www.desertmuseum.org/>

The 98-acre Desert Museum is a fusion experience: zoo, botanical garden, art gallery, natural history museum, and aquarium.

- 21 interpreted acres with two miles of walking paths through various desert habitats
- 230 animal species
- 1,200 types of plants — 56,000 individual specimens
- One of the world's most comprehensive regional mineral collections

Sabino Canyon: <http://www.sabinocanyon.com/>

Experience the beauty of one of the most unique Southwestern desert canyons on a Sabino Canyon tram ride. Sabino Canyon is a natural desert oasis located in Tucson's Coronado National Forest and is home to spectacular desert landscapes and abundant wildlife.

Saguaro National Park: <https://www.nps.gov/sagu/index.htm>

Tucson, Arizona is home to the nation's largest cacti. The giant saguaro is the universal symbol of the American west. These majestic plants, found only in a small portion of the United States, are protected by Saguaro National Park, to the east and west of the modern city of Tucson. Here you have a chance to see these enormous cacti, silhouetted by the beauty of a magnificent desert sunset.

Tucson Botanical Garden: <https://tucsonbotanical.org/>

Located on the site of the historic Porter property, among mature trees and expertly cultivated foliage, specialty gardens such as the Cactus & Succulent Garden, Barrio Garden and Herb Garden highlight the diversity of native plants while offering a lush oasis in the heart of Tucson. Tropical butterflies from around the world are featured in the Cox Butterfly & Orchid Pavilion Oct.–May. Experience year-round tours and art exhibits, as well as the creative, seasonal menu of Café Botanica. Now celebrating 40 years of living beauty, The Tucson Botanical Gardens is a unique gem not to be missed.

Reid Park Zoo: <https://reidparkzoo.org/>

The zoo, founded in 1965 with a collection of birds, prairie dogs, farm animals, and a few squirrel monkeys, has expanded to a 24-acre campus that houses hundreds of animals in naturalistic exhibits and annually hosts more than 500,000 visitors.

Tohono Chul Park: <https://tohonochulpark.org/>

Embrace the authentic beauty of the Sonoran Desert year-round at Tohono Chul, Tucson's charming crossroads of nature, art and culture. Set on 49 acres of lush desert, you can stroll along winding paths past soaring Saguaros, through themed botanical gardens and marvel at a chance encounter with a resident hummingbird. Enjoy quiet retreat in the artfully designed relaxation spots sprinkled throughout the lush grounds. Various art and garden exhibits reveal the unique qualities of the Sonoran region and renew a deep appreciation for the treasures of the desert.

Mission San Xavier del Bac: <http://www.sanxaviermission.org/>

The Mission is an active Catholic church - it was created to serve the needs of the local community here, the village of Wa:k (San Xavier District) on the Tohono O'odham reservation, as it still does today. The Mission's museum explains more about its history with artifacts. The best way to start your experience is with a 20 minute video which talks about the history of the Mission and its restoration. Then walk through the museum and look at the artifacts that give you a sense of the history and the way people lived here at the Mission. The museum is free and open to the public, although donations are accepted for upkeep. The museum's hours are: 8:00am - 4:30pm daily. In addition to the museum, the gift shop offers a wide array of items from t-shirts to authentic Tohono O'odham basket made right here on the reservation. The gift shop's hours are: 8:00am - 5:00pm.

Sentinel Peak is a 2,897 ft (883 m) peak in the Tucson Mountains southwest of downtown Tucson, Arizona. The valley's first inhabitants grew crops at the mountain's base, along the Santa Cruz River. The name "Tucson" is derived from the O'odham *Cuk Šon* [tʃʊk ʃɔ:n], meaning "[at the] base of the black [hill]". In the 1910s University of Arizona students used local basalt rock to construct a 160-ft-tall block "A" on the mountain's east face, near its summit, giving the peak its other name, "**A**" **Mountain**. The peak is part of a 272-acre park, the largest natural resource park in the City of Tucson

Old Tucson Studios: <http://oldtucson.com/>

Old Tucson is one of Arizona's top Wild West attractions, featuring live action stunt shows, musicals and live entertainment, vintage rides for the kids, genuine southwest BBQ and special events throughout the season. Step back in time as you make your way through town, walking the same streets made famous by movie legends such as John Wayne, Clint Eastwood, Elizabeth Taylor, Steve Martin, Sharon Stone and Martin Short. Immortalized in more than 400 films and commercial productions, Old Tucson remains the region's premiere film location.

Casinos

Desert Diamond Casino & Hotel - <https://www.ddcaz.com/tucson/>

Desert Diamond Casinos & Entertainment offers the games you love seven days a week. Owned and operated by the Tohono O'odham Nation, Desert Diamond has three locations in Southern Arizona. With the biggest uncapped jackpots in the state, Desert Diamond Casino has established itself as a premier destination for poker, and the blackjack tables are always on fire too. Bingo and keno fans will find high-stakes games with jaw-dropping jackpots; if you like to play slots, the casino offers the latest games as well as all of the old favorites. And when you're ready to party, Desert Diamond's on-site Monsoon Nightclub offers top-flight entertainment in an elegant setting. Catch national acts on stage or dance the night away with your friends. See the event line-up here.

Casino Del Sol - <https://www.casinodelsol.com/>

Casino Del Sol Resort, Spa & Conference Center is proudly owned and operated by The Pascua Yaqui Tribe and has been operating for over 20 years. Try your hand at the tables, or test your luck on the slot machines. Enjoy fine dining at the renowned PY Steakhouse or catch a show at the 5,000-seat AVA Amphitheater, an outdoor hot spot that serves Southern Arizona and hosts a wide range of touring popular musical acts, boxing matches, and more. This top Arizona casino also offers one of the state's best golf experiences with the newly built Sewailo Golf Course. This Notah Begay designed course offers incredible water features, long fairways, and beautiful mountain views. And for those who need to relax and unwind, the Hiapsi Spa and Fitness Center is the place to go.

Cathedral of Saint Augustine: <http://www.cathedral-staugustine.org/>

Another active Catholic parish, Saint Augustine Cathedral continues to serve the parishioners and the Diocese of Tucson.

Kitt Peak National Observatory: <https://nsokp.nso.edu/>

The National Solar Observatory operates telescopes at the summit of Kitt Peak, a mountain rising over 3,000 feet from the desert floor located about 60 miles west of Tucson. At the summit is located the McMath-Pierce Solar Facility, home to a 1.6m diameter all-reflecting solar telescope as well as two 81cm diameter reflectors. In addition, the Kitt Peak SOLIS Tower is where NSO takes daily measurements of the solar atmosphere and magnetic .Kitt Peak National houses one of the most extensive collections of telescopes anywhere in the world. Hours are daily 9am-4pm.

Mount Lemmon: <http://skycenter.arizona.edu/>

Mt. Lemmon SkyCenter is an exceptional science learning facility located at Steward Observatory's "sky island" observing site just north of Tucson, Arizona. The SkyCenter builds upon the uniqueness of the 9,157 feet summit of Mt. Lemmon and on the extensive knowledge base at the University of Arizona.

Foothills Mall: <http://www.shopfoothillsmall.com/>

Foothills Mall is an indoor regional shopping mall located on the Northwest Side of Tucson, Arizona, in the community of Casas Adobes.

Colossal Cave Mountain Park: <http://colossalcave.com/>

Big park offering tours of a cave with unique rock formations, museum exhibits & a butterfly garden. On the National Historic Register, the 2,400-acre Park showcases crystal-filled Colossal Cave and historic La Posta Quemada Ranch. Cave tours, Western trail rides, camping, picnicking. The temperature in the Cave is always a cool 70°F.

DeGrazia Gallery in the Sun: <http://degrazia.org/>

DeGrazia Gallery in the Sun Historic District is the artistic manifestation and architecture constructed by Ettore DeGrazia. The property is a series of buildings scattered throughout a natural desert setting.

Tombstone, Arizona: <http://tombstoneweb.com/>

<https://www.visitarizona.com/cities/tucson-and-southern/tombstone>

Tombstone is a town in southeastern Arizona, known for its Wild West history. Exhibits at the Tombstone Courthouse State Historic Park include a replica gallows. On historic Allen Street, the O.K. Corral outdoor theater re-enacts an 1881 cowboy gunfight. Resident ghosts are said to haunt the bullet-riddled Bird Cage Theatre. Outlaws are among the local townsfolk buried at the 1878 Boothill Cemetery. Tombstone offers a glimpse into the past with historic attractions such as museums, history tours on foot, by stagecoach or trolley, underground mine experiences, paranormal adventures, shopping, dining and of course gunfight reenactments!

Fort Lowell Museum: <http://www.arizonahistoricalociety.org/>

Fort Lowell was a United States Army post active from 1873 to 1891 on the outskirts of Tucson, Arizona. Fort Lowell was the successor to Camp Lowell, an earlier Army installation.

University of Arizona Art Museum: <http://artmuseum.arizona.edu/>

The University of Arizona Museum of Art is an art museum in Tucson, Arizona, operated by the University of Arizona.

Biosphere 2: <http://biosphere2.org/>

The Biosphere 2 is a 3.14-acre educational facility, designed to mimic a tropical or sub-tropical climate-controlled environment. Tours daily.

Cultural and other attractions

- The Fremont House is an original adobe house in the Tucson Community Center that was saved while one of Tucson's earliest barrios was razed as urban renewal.
- The Tucson Museum of Art was established as part of an art school, the Art Center, which was founded by local Tucson artists including Rose Cabat.
- Center for Creative Photography, a leading museum with many works by major artists such as Ansel Adams and Edward Weston.
- International Wildlife Museum, which is 5 mi (8.0 km) west of Interstate 10, maintains an exhibition of over four-hundred different stuffed animal species from around the globe.
- Titan Missile Museum is located about 25 mi (40 km) south of the city on I-19. This is a Cold War era Titan nuclear missile silo (billed as the only remaining intact post-Cold War Titan missile silo) turned tourist stop.
- Pima Air & Space Museum has a wide assortment of aircraft on display both indoors and outdoors.
- Trail Dust Town is an outdoor shopping mall and restaurant complex that was built from the remains of a 1950 western movie set.
- Museum of the Horse Soldier.
- Jewish History Museum (Tucson).
- Centennial Hall opened in 1937 as the University of Arizona's campus auditorium, designed by architect Roy Place.
- Tucson Chinese Cultural Center.
- Tucson Loop Shared Use Bike Path.
- Arizona State Museum (on the University of Arizona campus).
- Shopping: Shops in Summerhaven on Mount Lemmon offer such items as jewelry and other gifts, pizza, and fresh-fruit pies. The legacy of the Aspen Fire can be seen in charred trees, rebuilt homes, and melted beads incorporated into a sidewalk. Fourth Avenue, located near the University of Arizona, is home to many shops, restaurants, and bars, and hosts the annual 4th Avenue Street Fair every December and March. University Boulevard, leading directly to the UA Main Gate, is also the center of numerous bars, retail shops, and restaurants most commonly frequented by the large student population of the UA.
- El Tiradito is a religious shrine in the downtown area. The Shrine dates back to the early days of Tucson. It is based on a love story of revenge and murder.