

MESA ARIZONA



Day Trips and Half-Day Excursions

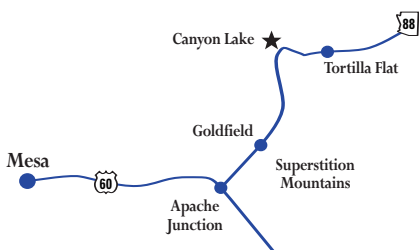
INTRO

Arizona has long been recognized for its sweeping desert vistas, red rock monoliths, clear mountain lakes surrounded by forests of pine and white water river rapids. Serving as a hub to recreation and adventure, visitors in Mesa can experience these diverse natural wonders by choosing any of the nine day trips listed. The itineraries include historical, cultural and nature tours, visits to ghost towns, gold panning and much more. Mesa's central location and close proximity to the Sonoran Desert allow for easy travel to and from the following excursions.

DAY TRIP 1

Apache Trail & Superstition Mountains

65 Miles Round Trip



The Apache Trail is one of the most popular day trips from the Phoenix-Mesa metro area. Follow the footsteps that Indians and prospectors took over 100 years ago. The trail features miles of spectacular desert wilderness and scenic beauty.

Ghostly, volcanic Superstition cliffs rise 2,000 feet, hiding the **Lost Dutchman Mine**, one of the most storied mines of the West. The **Superstition Mountain Lost Dutchman Museum** displays the artifacts, history and folklore of the Superstition Mountains and surrounding region. 480-983-4888

In the 1890s **Goldfield** was a booming community. Located on a little knoll off Mammoth Mine Road, Goldfield offers a guided tour of a reconstructed section of the Mammoth Mine. There are unique shops, a saloon and a general store. Enjoy a grilled steak or just pan for gold. Jeep tours are available on site. 480-983-0333

In the Tonto National Forest, **Canyon Lake Marina** offers a full-service restaurant with fine dining and spectacular views. Marine and fishing supplies are available for boaters and fishing enthusiasts. 480-288-9233

Climb aboard the **Dolly Steamboat at Canyon Lake** and cruise the secluded inner waterways on a Nature Cruise or a Twilight Dinner Cruise. Don't forget your camera and binoculars! 480-827-9144

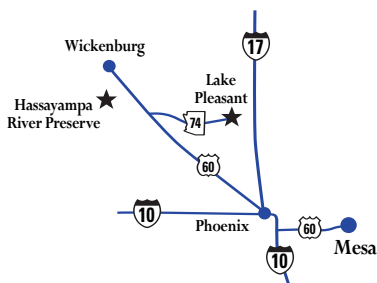
The famous authentic stagecoach stop of **Tortilla Flat** is nestled in the Superstition Mountain Wilderness. Belly up to the bar and get the best "Old West" burgers and home-style chili and salsa, then stop by the Old-Fashioned Ice Cream-Candy store and try the Prickly Pear ice cream. 480-984-1776



DAY TRIP 2

Wickenburg & Lake Pleasant

142 Miles Round Trip



Wickenburg, a short hour's drive northeast of Phoenix, is full of Old West legend, antiques, art galleries, outdoor recreation and wonderful scenery. Start at the bronze bust of Henry Wickenburg in front of Town Hall and take a quick walking tour of the historic town buildings. Stop by the **Jail Tree**, which once served as the town jail. Browse through fine art galleries showcasing Western, traditional cowboy, Southwestern, Native American and wildlife art.

Vulture Mine, 15 miles southwest of Wickenburg, offers tours. 928-684-5479

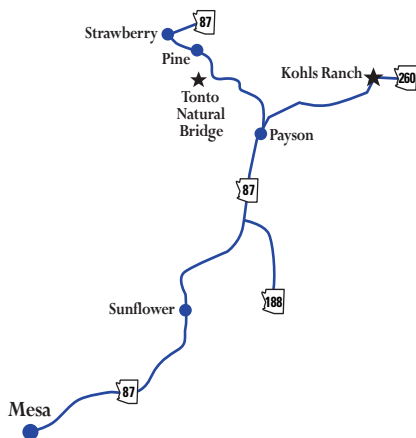
A special piece of Arizona's natural environment is being protected near Wickenburg. The **Hassayampa River Preserve** includes four miles of trails, offering visitors a chance to see birds, mammals and reptiles in a natural setting. 928-684-2772

To end your day, head 35 miles southeast on scenic Highway 74 to **Lake Pleasant**, one of the largest and finest boating locations in the state. Pleasant Harbor Marina has rental boats, jet skis, fishing boats, deck boats and houseboats. 928-501-1710

DAY TRIP 3

Mogollon Rim & Tonto Natural Bridge

206 Miles Round Trip



Travel north to take in the beauty of the Mogollon Rim Country. **Payson** is tucked under the spectacular 7,500-foot-high, 200-mile-long **Mogollon Rim**. 928-474-4515

Tonto Natural Bridge is believed to be the largest natural travertine bridge in the world at 400 feet long and 183 feet high. Visitors to this state park can stand on top of the bridge or hike down below to capture the true size and beauty of this geologic wonder. 928-476-4202

Settled in 1879 by Mormon pioneers, **Pine** is nestled in the shadow of the Mogollon Rim. Visitors will see many of the historical buildings that still remain in the area. The oldest Pioneer Days Celebration and Parade is held each July and enjoyed by folks from all around the state.

The mountain village of **Strawberry**, at 6,000 feet elevation, is just three miles west of Pine and takes its name from the wild strawberries growing in the area when it was founded. Arizona's oldest standing schoolhouse, constructed by pioneers in 1885, is in Strawberry and is now a state historical site.



DAY TRIP 4

Tucson, Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum & Saguaro National Park

235 Miles Round Trip



Founded in 1775, Tucson was a city before Phoenix was a stagecoach stop. Among the oldest European settlements in Arizona, Tucson is the state's second largest city with a unique blend of storied past and space-age present. Today, more than 850,000 people live in metropolitan Tucson. The **University of Arizona** is a major world center for astronomy with evening star shows at **Flandrau Planetarium**. 520-621-7827

Built in 1939 as the set for the epic film "Arizona," **Old Tucson Studios** has remained a popular place to experience the Old West. Rebuilt after a fire destroyed many of the old buildings, it continues to attract people of all ages. One of the most authentic locations for Western movies and TV shows, the studio has more than 300 productions in the can and more filmed every year. 520-883-0100

The **Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum** is an innovative, exciting mix of zoo, botanical garden and aquarium. Although it's called a museum, you will find this place is really a naturalist's dream—a mecca for the curious. 520-883-2702

Sabino Canyon is an extremely popular recreation area at the edge of Tucson. Hiking trails and picnic areas are abundant throughout the area. Many varieties of wildlife, such as deer and birds, have made the Coronado National Forest their home. A shuttle bus operates year-round. 520-749-2327

The famous **Mission San Xavier del Bac** has twin white towers rising from the green desert that gave it the name "White Dove of the Desert." San Xavier del Bac has been acclaimed the best example of Spanish mission architecture in the U.S. One tower remains uncompleted. 520-294-2624

Saguaro National Park has two separate areas, located on the east and west sides of Tucson. Choose a leisurely drive on one of the scenic loop drives or explore the park on more than 150 miles of hiking trails. 520-733-5153

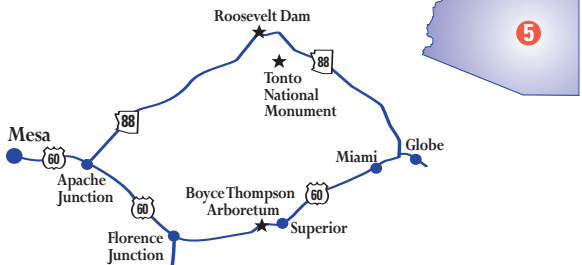


Boyce Thompson Arboretum

DAY TRIP 5

Globe-Miami & Tonto National Monument

236 Miles Round Trip



Boyce Thompson Arboretum displays 10,000 varieties of desert plants from throughout the world. Nestled at the base of Picketpost Mountain, the arboretum features a variety of gardens showcasing herbs, heritage roses, hummingbird and butterfly plants. The arboretum also boasts an interactive Children's Garden aimed at educating youngsters on the flora and fauna of the Sonoran Desert. 520-689-2811

Millions of tons of mine tailings can be seen as you drive along U.S. Highway 60 through the mining communities of historic **Globe** and **Miami**. Globe was named from the legend of a 50-pound "globe" shaped silver nugget. Numerous antique shops and art galleries are situated in historic downtown Globe. 928-425-4495

Besh-Ba-Gowah Indian Ruins, some of the best preserved ruins in the Southwest, are just minutes from Highway 60 in Globe. 928-425-0320

The **San Carlos Apache Cultural Center** and new **Apache Gold Casino** are 10 miles south of Globe on the San Carlos Reservation. 928-475-2894, 928-475-7800

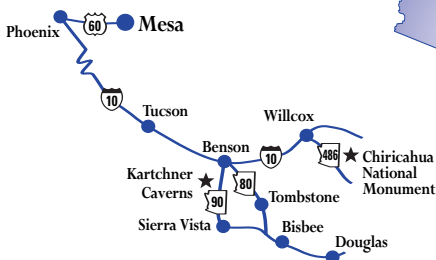
Among the rolling hills of greasewood and saguaro cacti, three miles south of Roosevelt Lake, is **Tonto National Monument**. Enjoy a nature hike to the Salado Indian ruins, where the well-preserved cliff dwellings show how these Indians lived 500 years ago. 928-467-2241

Roosevelt Dam is the largest masonry dam in the world. It was named for Theodore Roosevelt, who approved it as the first federal reclamation project. It is the keystone of the water reclamation and storage system, keeping the Valley of the Sun supplied with water. 928-467-3200

DAY TRIP 6

Benson, San Pedro River Valley & Kartchner Caverns State Park

300 Miles Round Trip



Benson and the San Pedro River Valley are rich in natural wonders and provides a home to more than 500 species of birds. **Benson** was established in the early 1880s as a railroad town and the railroad continues to be a prominent feature today. A historic replica of the Railroad Depot and Visitor Center in the downtown area reinforces this railroad heritage. 520-586-4293

“The Town Too Tough To Die,” **Tombstone** is the home of the most famous shootout of the Old West. Visit the OK Corral, Boot Hill and many other attractions. 520-457-9317

Chiricahua National Monument is a mecca for hikers and birders. Tours of the Faraway Ranch House provide a chance to learn about life in the early 1900s. 520-824-3560

Visitors can learn about Native American culture at the **San Pedro Valley Arts & Historical Museum**. 520-586-3070

The **Holy Trinity Monastery**, a serene prayer and hospitality facility, features a museum, art gallery, gift shop, thrift store, bookstore and a bird sanctuary with a walking path along a shaded pond. 520-720-4642

About 10 miles south of Benson is Arizona’s newest state park, **Kartchner Caverns**. This remarkable “live” cave was discovered in 1974 by a pair of spelunkers and kept secret until it could be properly protected and opened to the public. You’ll be amazed by the two enormous main rooms with spectacular limestone creations. Check out the Discovery Center, hiking trails and picnic area. This is also an excellent area for bird watching. 520-586-2283

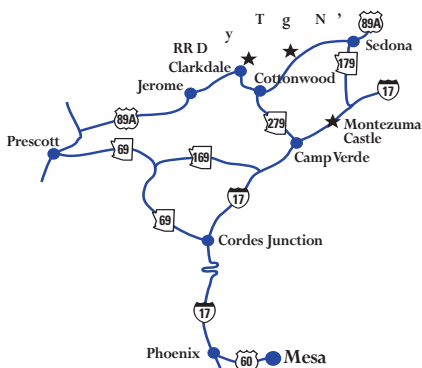


Kartchner Caverns

DAY TRIP 7

Prescott, Sedona, Jerome & the Verde Valley

323 Miles Round Trip



Located in the nation's largest contiguous forest of Ponderosa pine, **Prescott** is a beautiful city rich in Western flavor. Founded in 1863, Prescott became Arizona's first territorial capital and the region's economic center. Much of what was developed in those early days is preserved today – famous Whiskey Row, the downtown Courthouse Plaza and the first territorial governor's residence. Prescott is also the site of the world's oldest rodeo. 928-445-2000

Nestled in the heart of "Red Rock Country", **Sedona** has been proclaimed by travel journals throughout the world as "Arizona's Scenic Sensation." There are many fine art studios and restaurants, unbeatable scenery, and with more than 40 galleries, there is every kind of art imaginable. 928-282-7722

Built on the side of Mingus Mountain, part of **Jerome** and its economy slid downhill after the mines closed in 1951. Since the 1960s, the former mining center has enjoyed a rebirth from its ghost town status, becoming an enclave of galleries and restaurants, many of which are in the original buildings. The mansion of mining magnate James Douglas is now the Jerome State Historic Park. 928-634-2900

Near Jerome and Sedona are remnants of two distinctive cultures that once flourished in the Verde Valley.

Montezuma Castle is a five-story, 20-room dwelling in a cliff recess 100 feet above the valley. 928-567-3322

Tuzigoot National Monument is the remnant of a Sinaguan village built between 1125 and 1400. 928-634-5564

Situated on the Verde River, **Camp Verde** offers a wide variety of scenic, recreational and archaeological attractions. 928-567-9294

While in Camp Verde, don't miss **Out of Africa Wildlife Park**, Arizona's wildlife theme park with over 400 animals from all around the world. 928-567-2840

Fort Verde State Park has military buildings and troop quarters left as a reminder of one of the largest U.S. Cavalry posts built to protect settlers and wage war against the Apaches in the 1870s. 928-567-3275

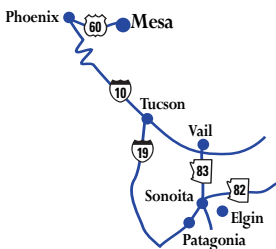
Home to the majestic bald eagle, Verde Canyon is accessible only by rail. Expert narration and guides on the **Verde Canyon Railroad's** four-hour scenic ride leave passengers with a sense of history, geology, archaeology, wildlife and Indian lore. 928-639-0010



DAY TRIP 8

Hummingbirds, Butterflies and Wine Country – Elgin, Patagonia & Sonoita

332 Miles Round Trip

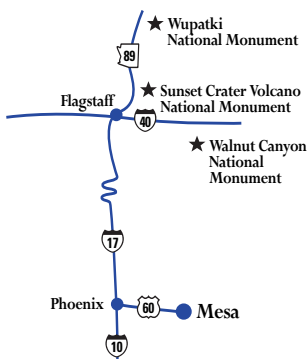


Discover Arizona's wine country with a short drive off I-10 south of Tucson. Highway 83 winds through mountain passes and offers spectacular views of rolling foothills, mountain ranges and Sonoita/Elgin's famous grasslands. The region's wine-producing origin dates back to the Spanish padres who discovered that the altitude and soil composition created ideal growing conditions. Today, more than 10 vineyards and wineries dot the Arizona landscape. Hummingbirds and butterflies are plentiful during the summer months. **Patagonia** 888-794-0060 **Sonoita/Elgin** 520-455-5498

DAY TRIP 9

Flagstaff, Walnut Canyon, Sunset Crater Volcano & Wupatki National Monuments

360 Miles Round Trip



Flagstaff is 142 miles north of Phoenix, an easy two-hour drive to enjoy the changing landscape from desert to lush forest. At 7,000 feet elevation, Flagstaff is nestled at the base of the beautiful *San Francisco Peaks*. Enjoy a stroll through charming historic downtown which boasts a variety of unique restaurants, boutiques and art galleries. 928-774-9541

Flagstaff is also home to *Northern Arizona University*, which offers a variety of cultural events and is the headquarters for High Altitude Sports Training for national and international athletes.



Near historic downtown Flagstaff, **Lowell Observatory** welcomes visitors of all ages to explore the modern visitor center, hands-on exhibits and scenic campus. Pluto was discovered at Lowell Observatory in 1930. Lowell's century-old Clark telescope is still used for night-sky viewing. 928-774-3358

The **Museum of Northern Arizona** is the ideal introduction to the native peoples and the natural sciences of the Colorado Plateau region. Permanent galleries, nature trails and changing exhibits explore the art and cultures of the Hopi, Navajo, Pai and Zuni people. 928-774-5213

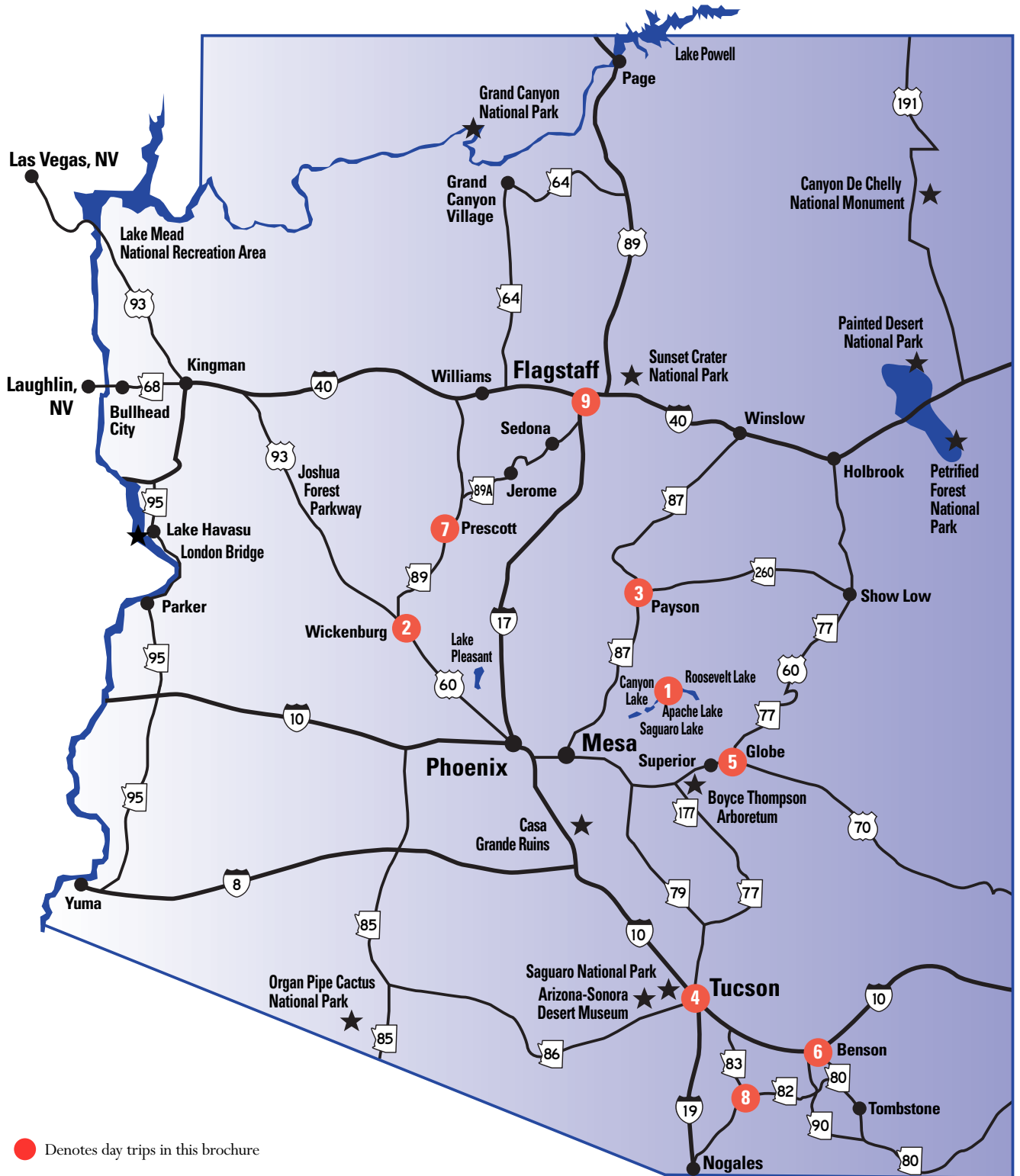
The **Arboretum** at Flagstaff is home to one of the largest collections of high-country wildflowers in America. Experience the 200-acre botanical garden, research station and environmental education center at 7,150 feet above sea level, in the world's largest ponderosa pine forest. 928-774-1442

Seven miles east of Flagstaff, **Walnut Canyon National Monument** encourages visitors to hike and learn about ancient cliff dwellings built in steep canyon walls where the Sinagua Indians lived nearly a thousand years ago. 928-526-3367

Fifteen miles north of Flagstaff, visitors can walk through trails of hardened lava produced some 900 years ago at **Sunset Crater Volcano National Monument**. 928-526-0502

Continuing northeast through the park the forest begins to change into high desert, commonly known as the **Painted Desert/Petrified Forest**, leading you to **Wupatki National Monument**. Here you can visit four of the pueblos that were once home to farmers and traders of the Anasazi and Sinagua people. **Painted Desert/Petrified Forest** 928-524-6228 **Wupatki National Monument** 928-679-2365





Map not to scale.

HALF-DAY ITINERARIES

Following are suggested activities that can be enjoyed in any order according to your schedule.

The Heart of Mesa – Historical and Cultural Tour

- **Arizona Museum of Natural History** – voted “Best Hidden Secret” by the *Arizona Republic*, this “mini-Smithsonian” features Southwest folklore, full-size dinosaurs, Indian dwellings, hands-on exhibits and *Arizona Highways* archive photos. 480-644-2230
- **Arizona Museum for Youth** – an art museum you can kid around in! 480-644-2467
- **Mesa Historical Museum** – showcases over 4,000 collectibles. 480-835-7358
- **Downtown Main Street** – shop and stroll through a variety of specialty stores and have lunch at one of our charming restaurants. 480-890-2613
- **Arizona Temple Visitors Center** – a noted landmark with beautifully manicured gardens. 480-964-7164
- **Mesa Arts Center** – browse through national juried, themed exhibitions of contemporary art or schedule a free tour of the seven-acre campus held Wednesdays at noon. 480-644-6500
- Enjoy **MACFest**, an arts and cultural festival in downtown Mesa Saturdays October – May, 10 am – 4 pm. Handmade creations from artists, food from local restaurants, live music, performing artists and fun for the whole family. Free and open to the public.



Native American History

- The four-story **Casa Grande Ruins** was built of local caliche, a hard, cement-like soil. South of the Phoenix-Mesa metro area, off State Highway 87/287. 520-723-3172
- **Pueblo Grande Museum and Archaeological Park** – tour prehistoric Hohokam ruins, see exhibits of ancient Hohokam artifacts and walk through replicas of Hohokam homes. Discover the excitement of archaeology in a hands-on exhibit for kids of all ages. Museum store features authentic American Indian arts and crafts. 602-495-0900



Panning for Gold – Ghost Towns and Gold Mines

- Enjoy a half-day adventure in the Goldfield Territory (Apache Trail) panning for REAL GOLD!
- **Goldfield Ghost Town** – stop and catch a tour of the famous Goldfield Mines, dine at the Mammoth Steak House, visit the ice cream shop, bakery and trading post. 480-983-0333
- Seek gold at **Casino Arizona**, only five miles from Mesa with over 750 slot machines, cards, keno, poker and blackjack. Don't forget to catch the free Showstoppers production! 480-850-7777

Back to Nature – Desert Plants and Canals

- **Apache Trail Tours** – exciting two-hour jeep tour through the Sonoran Desert and Superstition Mountains. Learn about the different species of plant and animal life. You even get to taste a real cactus! 480-982-7661
- **Boyce Thompson Arboretum State Park** – view thousands of varieties of desert plants from around the world. The arboretum also boasts an interactive Children's Garden aimed at educating youngsters on the flora and fauna of the Sonoran Desert. 520-689-2811
- **The Park of the Canals** – experience a 30-acre park of the ancient Hohokam Indian canal system dated 800-2000 years ago. 480-827-4700
- **Brinton Desert Botanical Garden** – neighboring the Park of the Canals, you will find an extensive desert botanical garden. More than 25 different varieties of prickly pear cacti. 480-827-4700
- Take a two-hour cruise aboard the **Dolly Steamboat**. 480-827-9144

Spring Training – Hot Dogs and Home Runs

- Take me out to the ball park – **HoHoKam Park**, home of the Cactus League Chicago Cubs. Spend the afternoon enjoying peanuts, hot dogs and a good old-fashioned baseball game in March. 480-827-4700
- Finish your evening with a classic Broadway show and dinner at the **Broadway Palm Dinner Theatre**. 480-325-6700

Fly Like an Eagle

- **Phoenix-Mesa Gateway Airport** – take a tour of the East Valley's newest airport. 480-988-7600
- **Fighter Combat International** – take an exciting aerial adventure – you actually fly the plane! 480-279-1881
- **Commemorative Air Force Museum** – home of "Sentimental Journey," the most authentically restored WWII B-17 flying today. 480-924-1940



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