nileGUIDE
ALL YOU NEED TO PLAN YOUR PERFECT TRIP

Loop-de-loop south of the peaks

Flagstaff, 1 Day

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Guide Description

AUTHOR NOTE: There are so many options for loops just south of the peaks that I thought I'd put them all down at once. There are spectacular views of the peaks and the surrounding forest on each of these routes and the routes are good all around from wildflower season to the season of the snow. My personal favorite is noted in the "day note," but your personal favorite may be one of the others. Also, while I prefer to walk, you might prefer to ride on wheels (an advanced single-track ride) or hooves. Choose your path, choose your transportation, and remember water and snacks! Also, unlike me, remember a camera so that you can upload a picture for one of these loops:)

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Itinerary Overview

things to do
restaurants
hotels
nightlife

Day 1 - Flagstaff

DAY NOTE: There are many ways to loop around the dry lakes, (my favorite spot in Flagstaff!). One that I just did yesterday was a loop that started at the junction of Elden Lookout road and Brookbank trail. I drove up Elden Lookout road about 3 miles past the point at which it turns into a dirt road and found a place to park. Brookbank begins on the left and shoots up for 1 mile to the dry lake meadow. After stopping at the corral up there for the dogs to have a swim, we continued northwest on Little Gnarly until we hit Schultz Creek trail. We walked east to Schultz tank which was wide and deep enough for us to take a swim in! While we dried off, we snacked, and then headed up Sunset trail back to Brookbank, around the unnamed peak and then down Brookbank to the car. The entire route was about 8.2 miles. The other trails listed in this trip leave you other options for your loop. You could do Rocky-Ridge-Brookbank-Little Gnarly-Schultz Creek; Brookbank-Little Gnarly-Schultz Creek-Little Elden-Little Bear-Brookbank (a LONG one); or Brookbank-Sunset-Upper Oldham. These are the most obvious, but find what works best for you. I recommend buying a Flagstaff trail map at one of the outdoor stores when you hit town. It has all of the topography on it too. Have fun!

Brookbank Trail
Rocky 2.5 mile trail

Sunset Trail

Little Bear Trail
Gradual, switch-back climb to valley

Oldham Trail

Rocky Ridge Trail

Schultz Creek Trail

Little Elden Trail

New Jersey Pizza Company
Eat in or takeout pizza

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Day 1 - Flagstaff

QUICK NOTE

DAY NOTE: There are many ways to loop around the dry lakes, (my favorite spot in Flagstaff!). One that I just did yesterday was a loop that started at the junction of Elden Lookout road and Brookbank trail. I drove up Elden Lookout road about 3 miles past the point at which it turns into a dirt road and found a place to park. Brookbank begins on the left and shoots up for 1 mile to the dry lake meadow. After stopping at the corral up there for the dogs to have a swim, we continued northwest on Little Gnarly until we hit Schultz Creek trail. We walked east to Schultz tank which was wide and deep enough for us to take a swim in! While we dried off, we snacked, and then headed up Sunset trail back to Brookbank, around the unnamed peak and then down Brookbank to the car. The entire route was about 8.2 miles. The other trails listed in this trip leave you other options for your loop. You could do Rocky-Ridge-Brookbank-Little Gnarly-Schultz Creek; Brookbank-Little Gnarly-Schultz Creek-Little Elden-Little Bear-Brookbank (a LONG one); or Brookbank-Sunset-Upper Oldham. These are the most obvious, but find what works best for you. I recommend buying a Flagstaff trail map at one of the outdoor stores when you hit town. It has all of the topography on it too. Have fun!

contact:
tel: 520-526-0866
fax: 502-527-8288

location:
5075 N. Highway 89
Flagstaff AZ 86004

1 Brookbank Trail

DESCRIPTION: This quiet trail offers solitude to hikers, horseback riders and mountain bikers looking for a strenuous hike that has spectacular rewards. The rocky trail opens toward the top in a beautiful meadow that, particularly in the summer, is full of wildflowers. Purple, pink, yellow, blue, and orange dot this landscape beneath spectacular views of "The Peaks." Early morning hikers should tread softly and look out for elk, mule deer, and if lucky, black bear. Drive north from Flagstaff on US 180 to FR 420 (Schultz Pass Road). Drive east for 1 mile and, where FR 420 takes a hard left turn continue straight on FR 557 about 3 miles to the Brookbank trailhead. © NileGuide

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2 Sunset Trail

DESCRIPTION: Views of the San Francisco Peaks, the volcanic fields east of Flagstaff, Sunset Crater and even the Painted Desert are yours to enjoy along this high country trail. The route starts near Schultz Tank, a rare body of water here in these mountains Spanish explorers called sin agua (without water). It then climbs gradually to a high ridge where you'll find good views of Arizona's tallest mountain before continuing on to the east edge of Mount Elden's summit plateau. From this high perspective you can look down on Sunset Crater and the huge Bonito Lava Flow that borders it. As you hike along this trail, take time out to check for black bear tracks in the dust. A few of these shy animals live in this area but usually all you see of them are their tracks. You have a much better chance of seeing elk and mule deer which are more plentiful and much less shy. Along its highest reaches, the Sunset Trail traverses an area devastated by a fierce wildfire in 1977. At one point there was concern that the city of Flagstaff might even be consumed by this campfire gone wild. Here, among the burned out hulks of a once thriving forest you can see how nature recovers from such an all-consuming disaster. Pioneer plants such as aspen and Gambel oaks are already well established in the burned-over area. Sunset Trail provides a connecting route to Schultz Creek, Brookbank, Little Bear Trail, Upper Oldham, and Elden Lookout Trails.

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location:
Flagstaff AZ 86001

3 Little Bear Trail

DESCRIPTION: 8 miles north of Flagstaff, in the Dry Lake Hills. A very scenic ride on mostly smooth singletrack.

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Flagstaff AZ 86004

4 Oldham Trail

DESCRIPTION: Oldham Trail begins in Buffalo Park, Flagstaff's urban forest park, and climbs gradually up the south slope of Mt. Elden, an extinct volcano. The trail gets its name from Oldham Park, an open area near Elden's summit. From that high perspective you'll get a bird's eye view of Flagstaff and the surrounding area including mountains, deserts, and canyons as much as a hundred miles away. Some prominent features that are easily visible are Oak Creek Canyon, Sunset Crater, and the Painted Desert. Along the lower reaches of the trail, you'll encounter boulder fields and cliffs where there are hidden crevices to explore and rocky nooks that make great places to picnic. As you climb higher, the trail takes you from a ponderosa pine forest into groves of aspen and mixed conifer stands of spruce, fir and pine. In Oldham Park you'll see evidence of a catastrophic burn that occurred in 1977. Although the area affected by this huge wildfire still looks barren from Flagstaff, up close you can see how nature is healing from this man-made disaster. Near Elden Summit, Oldham Trail joins the Sunset Trail which leads north across the top of Elden to Schultz Pass and south to the Elden Lookout Trail and east Flagstaff.

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5075 N. Highway 89
Flagstaff AZ 86004

5 Rocky Ridge Trail

DESCRIPTION: This rocky path over rolling terrain leads through a forest of ponderosa pines interspersed with stunted Gambel oaks and gnarled alligator junipers. Also found on this arid south slope of the Dry Lake Hills are a number of hardy shrubs and ground hugging desert plants. Among these are cliffrose, broadleaf yucca and prickly pear cactus. Combined they add a bit of desert ambiance to the surroundings. In season, colorful wildflowers add a splash of brightness to the rocky slopes. From mid-spring to late summer along the trailside you'll see a number of varieties of paintbrush, a creamy yellow flower called butter and eggs and lots of bright red penstemon. Though this trail is quite close to town, evidence of wildlife is none the less common. The tracks of coyote and elk are frequently mixed in with the tracks of joggers, hikers and mountain bikers. In midsummer the sweet notes of the area's resident songbird, the hermit thrush echo through the forest. As the trail roller coasters over the shallow dry washes that crease the lower slopes of the Dry Lake Hills it offers good views of Flagstaff and its western suburbs. The upper reaches of Oak Creek and Sycamore Canyons are visible in the background. So is Mormon Mountain. Rocky Ridge Trail provides a convenient connecting route between Schultz Creek Trail and the Oldham Brookbank trails.

contact:
tel: 520-526-0866
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location:
5075 N. Highway 89
Flagstaff AZ 86004

6 Schultz Creek Trail

DESCRIPTION: Schultz Creek Trail parallels one of several intermittent drainages that carry water from the higher reaches of the San Francisco Peaks. Generally the stream only has water in it a few months of every year, either during the spring snow melt or after a summer monsoon. However, even when there is no water here, which is most of the time, walking beside the water-smoothed stones and ledges worn by ephemeral waterfalls can still give one the pleasant feeling of being near a brook even if you have to imagine the babble. This trail has one of the most moderate gradients on any in the San Francisco Peaks/ Mt. Elden Area. Still, it has enough ups and downs to be extremely popular with mountain bikers and off-road motorcyclists, both of whom it is open

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to. So, if you come for a hike or a horseback ride, keep your ears and eyes open and be ready to share the trail with users of all sorts. If you hike this trail during a quiet time, Albert's squirrels and Steller's jays are animals you might see here. During late spring and early summer this is a good place to hear the musical trill of the hermit thrush. Schultz Creek Trail serves as a connecting trail between Rocky Ridge and the Sunset trails. NOTES: Motorcycles are permitted on this trail as are mountain bikes and horses, so keep your eyes open.

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7 Little Elden Trail

DESCRIPTION: The Little Elden Trail begins within the boundaries of the City of Flagstaff, then leads the user into the heart of the Peaks trail system, at Schultz Tank. From this point you can connect to the Dry Lake Hills/Mt. Elden trails to the south, or the Kachina Peaks Wilderness trail system to the north. The Little Elden Trail winds along the north side of Little Elden Mountain through stands of gamble oak and Ponderosa pine.

contact:
tel: 928 774 5000

location:
2224 E Cedar Ave Ste 6
Flagstaff AZ 86004

8 New Jersey Pizza Company

DESCRIPTION: Quality ingredients and interesting toppings make new Jersey Pizza Company a good pizza experience.

MY NOTE: You'll be craving it when you're done--trust me!

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Flagstaff Snapshot

Local Info

Surrounded by the tall Ponderosa Pines of theCoconino National Forest, Flagstaff merges the Old and New West to near-perfection, preserving its history as a major railroad town while emerging as a growing and vibrant college town with an impressive roster of hip bars, cafes, breweries, art galleries and cultural events. With its proximity toSedona,Grand Canyon National Park, and a number of Native American archeological sites, Flagstaff makes a perfect base for exploring some of the most spectacular scenery in the American West.

Located in the high mountain air of Northern Arizona, Flagstaff has earned the reputation as a cool-weather sanctuary for Phoenix desert-dwellers sweating through another triple-digit summer. In the winter,Arizona Snow Bowl, one of the oldest ski areas in the United States, located north of town on the majestic San Francisco Peaks(the highest point in Arizona), becomes a playground for skiers and snowboarders from across the state. No matter what time of year you visit Flagstaff, chances are the weather will be a perfect fit for the season, the bars will stay open late, and the crisp air and scent of pine trees will remind you why you came in the first place.

Historic Downtown/Railroad District

This is the heart of Flagstaff, where funky new boutiques and bars compete with Old West landmarks for your time. TheFlagstaff Visitor Center is located inside the 1926 train depot, where you can pick up a map for a walking tour of downtown.Route 66 enthusiasts will have a ball spotting the historic motels and autoshops that once catered to a steady stream of jalopies making their way west on America's Mother Road.Historic Downtown Flagstaff experienced a decline in the 1970s and 1980s when major department stores like JC Penney's and Sears fled for the suburbs, but Downtown is back with a vengeance, with turn-of-the-century structures getting face-lifts, nightlife going strong at bars and venues like theOrpheum Theater, and plenty of regional and ethnic eateries to keep you happily fed. Stay in the thick of it at the historicHotel Monte Vista, just a block north of Route 66, and head toHeritage Square for free live music or to just soak up the friendly Western vibe of downtown Flagstaff.

University Area

Chances are that Flagstaff would have remained just another scenic railroad town if not for the presence ofNorthern Arizona University, which added an intellectual dimension to the region and has attracted world-renowned thinkers, artists, and scientists to the city over the years. The University district begins south of the downtown railroad crossing, where locals and visitors can hang out at dozens of cafes, bars, shops, and hostels. The University supports a year-round calendar of performing arts events, including theater, symphony, and plays host to full schedule of college athletics where the locals show up to support their beloved Lumberjacks.

History buffs will love appreciate the well-preservedRiordan Mansion State Historic Park adjacent to campus, which preserves two magnificent 19th Century homes that once belonged to lumber tycoons Michael and Timothy Riordan. Also on campus is the Northern Arizona University Art Museum, which houses an impressive collection of ceramics and presents several exhibits throughout the year.

Westside

The major attraction west of downtown isLowell Observatory, founded in 1894 by wealthy Bostonian and amateur astronomer Percival Lowell, and one of the oldest observatories in the United States. It was here that the dwarf planet Pluto was detected in 1930. The Visitor Center is a great place for stargazers of all ages to hang out, featuring interactive astronomy exhibits and a gift shop. In the evening, visitors are invited to take a peek at the Milky Way through one of the observatory's telescopes.

Fort Valley/North

Just north of town in Fort Valley is theCoconino Center for the Arts, a popular local concert venue and the largest art gallery in Northern Arizona. The Center plays host to a popular series of seasonal exhibitions, including the Annual Recycled Art Show in April and the Elemental Fine Crafts exhibition in December. Just down the road, theMuseum of Northern Arizona celebrates the living cultures of the Colorado Plateau and the Four Corners region with presentations, performances, and popular festivals like the Annual Hopi Festival of Arts and Culture held every July and the Annual Navajo Festival of Arts and Culture in August.

About twelve miles north of town,Sunset Crater Volcano National Monument offers visitors a glimpse into the region's geological past. The giant crater, streaked sunset-orange by iron oxide, was formed about 900 years ago after a volcanic explosion. Walk the one-mile Lava Flow Trail for an up-close look at the lava fields. Just a short and scenic drive north of Sunset Crater,Wupatki National Monument, one of the Southwest's largest Indian ruin, looms like a magnificent red-clay fortress in the distance. The four-story sandstone village, which includes multiroom dwellings, an amphitheater, and ball court, gives visitors a fascinating glimpse into the daily lives of its inhabitants, who lived here over 800 years ago.

Eastside

Even if you only have a passing interest in history, you'll want to spend some time exploring the Colorado Plateau and regional Native American archeological and heritage sites east of town. Located approximately seven miles east of Flagstaff on I-40, the limestone caves ofWalnut Canyon, home to a band of Sinagua Indians 800 years ago, offers challenging hiking trails that will reward you with spectacular, photo-worthy canyon views.

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History

The first settlers in Flagstaff, drawn to the cool pine forests around 15,000 to 20,000 years ago, shared the land with bison, antelope and camel, supporting their people by hunting and foraging, until they settled into an agricultural way of life, surviving on a diet of beans, squash and corn.

From those early settlers, the Sinagua evolved, a tribe that moved into the area of present-day Flagstaff and south to Oak Creek Canyon around the year 1,000 CE. Their name is derived from the Spanish for"no water," a reference to the leaky, porous limestone cliffs where the tribe built dwellings that were

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noted by the first Spanish explorers. The Sinagua constructed an elaborate system of irrigation and adobe pueblos in the nooks and niches of protective cliffs such as Walnut Canyon, but by the time the Spaniards came to the region in the 16th Century, the Sinagua had already abandoned their homes for reasons that are still unclear. Historians debate whether they were driven away by drought, disease or hostile Athabascan tribes invading from the north. Hundreds of ruins like those at Wupatki National Monument have been found to prove the tribe existed, but nothing remains to confirm why they left.

European settlers did not move into the area until the 1870s, soon after the Apaches had been driven to southeastern Arizona. A few colonizers arrived in 1876 and established a settlement called Agassiz near San Francisco Peaks but, lacking the knowledge and technology of the Sinagua, decided that the area was not good for farming. A sheepherder named Thomas Forsythe MacMillan eventually arrived in the area and concluded that it was a great land for raising sheep. By 1880, the area's population had grown to 67.

Two years later, the Atlantic and Pacific Railroad(now the Santa Fe) arrived, and the town's future was secured. The sound of trains has remained Flagstaff's acoustic trademark, as any visitor will confirm after listening to the whistle of the many freight trains that pass through Flagstaff every day.

According to local lore, the town acquired its name from a pole that may or may not have ever existed. Some say that a Ponderosa pine tree was stripped and a flag hoisted on July 4, 1876, to mark the Centennial of US Independence, while others insist that it was used as a marker to guide travelers west. No matter what happened, the pole is lost forever, as it was turned into firewood for one of the many saloons. What we know for sure is that the name Flagstaff was selected by a group of citizens meeting at a tent store in 1881.

In 1886 and 1888, fires destroyed the settlement. Fortunately, enough lumber was around for rebuilding, and in 1891, Flagstaff became seat of the newly created Coconino County. In 1894, the city was incorporated and Lowell Observatory was established, which was destined to become one of the leading astronomy institutions in the world.

Lumber quickly grew into the main industry in Coconino Forest, making some entrepreneurs very rich in the process, notably lumber magnate Michael Riordan, whose legacy is well preserved in his mansion at Riordan State Historic Park. Riordan also gained some notoriety for being one of the first known pot-hunters, exploring and looting the Walnut Canyon ruins until local citizens became alarmed at the extent of the destruction wreaked on the cliff dwellings. The Chamber of Commerce, acknowledging the tourist value of the ruins, denounced the mutilation in 1891, and in 1904, the site became part of the San Francisco Mountain Preserve.

While timber remains one of the mainstays of Flagstaff's economy and the county provides more than half of Arizona's domestic sheep, tourism has now become the city's most important enterprise. Located at an altitude of more than 7,000 feet, in close proximity to the Grand Canyon, Flagstaff has long attracted health seekers as well as people from around the world eager to explore its natural beauty.

In 1912, Flagstaff just barely missed the opportunity to become the movie capital of the world, when director Cecil B. DeMille came looking for a location where outdoor shooting was possible all year round. Unfortunately, a snow flurry descending on the town convinced him that this was not the place, and he moved further west to a region with more agreeable weather. However, Flagstaff has been frequently featured in film and TV productions since. One room at The Monte Vista Hotel was actually used for a scene in the movieCasablanca, and you can spend the night there, too. The foundation of Normal School in 1899, the precursor to Northern Arizona University(NAU), added a new cultural and intellectual dimension to this timber town, and metropolitan Flagstaff has since developed into the main center of cultural activity in Northern Arizona. Numerous events and festivals, such as the Coconino County Fair and the Flagstaff Winterfest, attract enough visitors to create serious traffic congestion during summer months. NAU itself, which is now the town's biggest employer, hosts a variety of art and music events throughout the year. While most of the shopping has moved to the suburbs, new cafes and specialty stores have sprung up inside well-tended old structures in the historic downtown district. With a population of 65,000 and growing, Flagstaff suffers from symptoms of urban sprawl, but there is little of the downtown sleaziness and scruffiness that characterizes many other cities trying to cope with the problems of rapid growth. The restoration and expansion of downtown Flagstaff is on going, and the best way to keep current and get a feel for the history of this town is to get out of the car and take a leisurely walk around the historic district along Santa Fe Avenue, the street also known as Route 66.
©

Hotel Insights

Tourism has long been one of the pillars of Flagstaff's economy. Situated at a major crossroads of ground transportation, and in close proximity to some of the greatest natural wonders in the country, the town offers an abundance of accommodations for both business and leisure travelers. Lodging may be found in both central locations and further out, in the Ponderosa Pine forests surrounding the town.

Historic Downtown/Railroad District

If you want to avoid the sterile ambiance of motel chains, consider staying in the downtown district. A surprising number of bed and breakfasts and historic hotels are sitting right in or around the center of town, within easy walking distance from its urban attractions. Lodge in luxurious bedrooms and savor award-winning breakfasts at the Inn at 410 on Leroux Street, or stay in a downtown Flagstaff historic building at Lynn's Inn Bed and Breakfast. Lovers of Southwestern ambience and Hollywood lore should definitely check out The Hotel Monte Vista, where one can spend the night at very low rates in rooms bearing the names of the movie stars who used to lodge there. Hunters of historic celebrities will also be attracted to the Weatherford Hotel on Leroux, considered the most elegant hotel of its day, with guests including President Theodore Roosevelt, Wyatt Earp and cowboy writer Zane Grey. Just a few minutes south of the railroad tracks on San Francisco Street, the Grand Canyon International Hostel offers private and shared rooms to travelers from around the world at budget rates, which include free breakfast and coffee as well as transportation to the Greyhound Bus Station.

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Westside

Located in a residential neighborhood just half a mile from downtown, the Comfi Cottages of Flagstaff combine generous breakfasts with privacy and conveniences like barbecue grills and picnic tables. Days Inn Flagstaff- West Route 66 offers laundry facilities and, more importantly, a pool to cool off in after a long day hiking. Buffalo Pointe Lodge is located close to many fishing, cycling and bird watching options, while the rustic interior of the Radisson Woodlands Hotel Flagstaff makes guests feel as though they're staying in the wilderness.

Eastside

More lodging near nature is available on the northern side of town around the base of the towering San Francisco Peaks. Located three miles north of the Flagstaff Mall, the Fall Inn to Nature, surrounded by wildflowers and Ponderosa Pines, sports a natural decor with a view of Mount Elden and the peaks. Trails and horseback riding are nearby. As an area popular with nature lovers and outdoor persons, Flagstaff offers several options for campers. The largest such facility is located three miles south of downtown off I-19 at Fort Tuthill Coconino County Park on 30-acres of pine forest with plenty of opportunities for hiking. As this site is situated right next to the Coconino County Fairgrounds, summer visitors must expect to occasionally be exposed to the lights and noises of carnivals and fairs. Ample space for both RVs and tents is also provided at the Flagstaff Grand Canyon KOA on the northeast side of town on Highway 89, the road leading to nearby Sunset Crater and Wupatki Monument. The KOA offers various conveniences such as showers, coin laundry, groceries and a range of planned summer recreational activities such as cookouts. Similarly, Black Bart's RV Park on Butler, off I-40, has all the amenities expected from a typical American campground, including full hookups.

Southside

For travelers wanting to be close to nature during their stay here, the pine forests south of Flagstaff contain plenty of accommodations far from the noises of cars and trains. Located six miles south of downtown, The Sled Dog Inn offers private baths, spa and breakfast packages, and is also open for dinners on weekends.
©

Restaurants Insights

It's not uncommon to feel a bit light-headed in Flagstaff. After all, the average elevation is more than 7,000 feet above sea level and when you get up into the mountains, it's pushing the two-mile mark. Being so close to the stratosphere can have its impact. But then again, maybe you're just hungry. If that's the case, the cure is as near as a neighborhood cafe, a tasty ethnic eatery or a sizzling steakhouse.

Historic Downtown/Railroad District

Full-fledged foodies might be surprised at the caliber of the culinary talent who call Flagstaff home. Frank and Nancy Branham launched Cottage Place Restaurant in 1994, bringing their own upscale European-inspired fare in a beautiful setting. The restaurant offers exquisite French cuisine in an idyllic cottage setting, consistently being awarded"Best Fine Dining" status.

University Area

La Bellavia is just one part of an enclave of eateries on this South Beaver Street block. Right next door, Macy's European Coffee House and Bakery is a mecca for natural food fans with an appetizing array of vegetarian, non-dairy and wheat-free fare and freshly roasted coffees. If you think that nutrition-consciousness is passe, you haven't tried to get a table in this tiny café! Directly across the street, Beaver Street Brewery and Whistle Stop Cafe Flagstaff's first microbrewery, receives consistent commendations for its lagers and ales(Railhead Red is their signature brew) as well as its well-prepared pub food. It's no surprise that you'll find great steaks and barbecue here. After all, this is the Southwest. There's some mighty fine Mexican, too. Try Café Olé.

Granny's Closet is an Italian-accented fine dining restaurant near Northern Arizona University that's long been a big hit with students, parents and anyone looking for an affordable, appetizing meal. Strombolli's is famous for both their namesake stuffed pastry pockets and their specialty pizzas. It's hard to drive a mile in Flagstaff without happening on a Chinese restaurant. But that doesn't detract from either their popularity or their quality. In fact, they regularly vie, and often tie, for the status of being named the best in town by the local media. Nearly every prefecture is well represented. For Mandarin, there's August Moon, while Asian Gourmet specializes in Hong Kong-style cuisine. The best of the wurst, by far, can be had at Sun Sausage Deli and Brat House, with specialty sausages made by masters in the nearby mountains and served up in the original 1930s Flagstaff bus station.

Eastside

Though some have tried, man can't live by beer alone. So let's eat. Have a hankerin' for a cowboy steak in a Wild West setting? You're in luck here. Black Bart's Steakhouse Saloon, just off Interstate 40 on Butler Avenue is a chuck wagon-style feast. The saloon is decked out in full frontier fashion with a mounted buffalo head and a Conestoga-load of cowboy collectibles. The Black Bart Singers(waiters who double as entertainers) offer a foot stompin', knee slappin' musical revue nightly. Just up the road a piece, about three miles north of Flagstaff Mall, you'll find Western meals that are a bit more gentile at the Horsemen Lodge, a rustic, mountain-style retreat.

But where's the Italian? The Asian? The wursts and the wieners? They can all be found in Flagstaff's endless array of ethnic eateries. Mamma Luisa not only hand-cuts each portion of veal, but bakes their own crusty, chewy Italian breads. Dead heads(not of the Jerry Garcia variety) are actually part of the decor at another Flagstaff institution. The Museum Club, a.k.a."The Zoo," has been named Bar of the Month byBartender Magazine, is one ofCar& Driver Magazine's Top Ten Roadhouses and one of the most historic and interesting clubs in the U.S. Founded by taxidermist Dean Eldredge to display his animals and artifacts, the property became a nightclub in 1936. You'll still find Eldredge's stuffed bobcats, bears, owls and peacocks perched in the tree branches above the dance floor. And, hey, this may be a former museum, but it's no mausoleum—it turns into an after hours club on weekends. Rediscover the heyday of historic Route 66 at Miz Zips Cafe.
©

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Nightlife Insights

With its large student and artist population, Flagstaff is able to offer visitors a varied cultural scene, combining small-town charm with a selection of urban excitement that includes classical symphony concerts, Native American dances and rodeos. While most of the tourist crowds come to town looking for natural beauty, there is no dearth of cultural attractions to keep them entertained while figuring out the best way to see the Grand Canyon. During recent years, the City Council and the Chamber of Commerce have stepped up efforts to put the town on the map as the cultural center of Northern Arizona. If they succeed, Flagstaff may well become to Arizona what Santa Fe is to New Mexico.

Festivals

Year-round arts and music festivals, both indoors and outdoors, have rapidly become the mainstay of cultural life in town. As one of Arizona's few true wintering spots, Flagstaff puts on a good show in the snow for the Flagstaff Winterfest in February, provided, of course, that snowfall becomes more abundant than it has been in recent years; but even without snow and sled dog races, the concerts and cultural events of the festival are always fun to attend. Throughout the year, Northern Arizona University(NAU), the center of scientific and artistic activity in Flagstaff, hosts many special events, concerts, exhibits and theatrical performances featuring national talent in a variety of media.

Summer brings the Celebration of Native American Art, an event that honors the creativity of American Indian artists and features the arts and crafts of the Navajo, Hopi, Pai and Zuni tribes. During the third weekend in June, when the weather is reliably warm and sunny without being too hot, contenders from all over the country gather at the Pine Country Pro Rodeo to compete in this classic Western spectacle. In August, more than 75,000 visitors throng to the Flagstaff Summer Fest, a three-day arts and crafts affair showing a multitude of juried artists, musical performances and specialty food vendors. The event attracts many people wanting to escape from the brutal heat of the southern deserts. Also during the month of August, the mountain air is filled with the sounds of classical music and pops played at the Flagstaff Festival of The Arts. On that occasion, you are likely to see the Flagstaff Symphony Orchestra perform alongside other musicians of world renown, as well as the local Theatrikos Theatre Company and Northern Arizona University's College of Creative and Performing Arts. Many events take place on campus at the Ardrey Auditorium, a large performance space equipped with state-of-the-art stage technology. In September, the Grand Canyon Music Festival, a chamber music concert series, is held at the south rim of the Grand Canyon, featuring world-class musicians from all over the United States, followed by the Pops Concerts in Sedona with the Flagstaff Symphony at center stage, an orchestra that has been the source of enjoyment and pride for Flagstaff citizens for more than 50 years. Its Great Classics and Best of Pops concert series in the Ardrey Auditorium, held September through April, are always packed. The Flagstaff Festival of Science at the beginning of October is 10 days of family-friendly infotainment including interactive exhibits and open houses at observatories, museums and other science venues. As the end of the year approaches, the town sports a festive air at the annual Holiday Lights Festival, as more than 2,000,000 lights start twinkling in the trees through the New Year. Complimentary hot cider and cookies are served, and, of course, Santa will be there. In short, something cultural is bound to happen any time you visit.

Galleries and Museums

The downtown district is also an excellent starting point to explore art venues such as the Artist's Gallery, a contemporary art cooperative showcasing the work of forty local artists. Art aficionados should also take some time explore the Old Main Art Gallery at the northern end of the NAU campus, which exhibits works made by painters, ceramicists and jewelry makers of local, regional and national renown, supplemented by frequent guest-artist lectures.

Nightlife

Jazz, blues, rock and country music are thriving in Flagstaff. Supported by large college crowd, most bars and clubs offer live entertainment any night of the week, with open mic events usually scheduled on Sunday and Monday nights. Most venues are in the historic downtown area within easy walking distance of each other, so you can go bar hopping without being tempted to drive after drinking. There's always some action at The Alley(formerly The Monsoons) on Santa Fe Avenue, where audiences like to holler at blues artists and punk rock bands of varying quality, while the barkeepers can hardly keep up with orders for more beer. Meanwhile, the Monte Vista Lounge lures club hoppers inside with nightly blues, jazz and classic rock. Yet another lodging venue, the Weatherford Hotel on Leroux, features nightly blues and jazz bands at Charley's, while—Country and Western aficionados will invariably be directed to the Museum Club, the town's cowboy honky tonk.
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Things to Do Insights

Before embarking on an exploration of Flagstaff, be sure to equip yourself with maps and brochures available at the Flagstaff Visitor Center inside the Amtrak Station or at any of the numerous newsstands around town.

Flagstaff Historic Downtown Explore the Flagstaff Historic Downtown, where you'll find the Colonial Hotel Monte Vista and the Weatherford Hotel. Take a walk through Thorpe Park, then grab a bite to eat at Pasto.

Northern Arizona University Explore the large Northern Arizona University campus, which is almost a self-contained town in its own right, with plenty of opportunities for learning and diversion. Visit the Old Main Art Gallery on the northwest end of the campus. Tour the Riordan State Historic Park, which contains a mansion-style estate, then dine at nearby Strombolli's Restaurant and Pizzeria or Buster's Restaurant and Bar.

Pioneer Museum Explore the offerings at the Pioneer Museum, marked by the 1929 Baldwin logging train in front, and the Coconino Center for the Arts and the Art Barn, the main center of artistic activity in the area and a great source for Native American arts and crafts. The Museum of Northern Arizona offes a good introduction to the geology and history of the region. The Lowell Observatory is a short drive away, and provides some great aerial views of the town. When you're through, dine at Sakura.

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Wupatki National Monument Many ruins have been found in the eastern area of Flagstaff, with Wupatki National Monument being the biggest and best preserved one of them all. You will also find Walnut Canyon National Monument and the Homolovi Ruins State Park here. Walk the popular Bushmaster Park then enjoy a meal at the Western Gold Dining Room.

Flagstaff Nordic Center Enjoy breakfast at Cafe Espress downtown, then head to Northern Arizona. The Flagstaff Nordic Center offers skiing opportunities, while the Monument Valley Navajo Tribal Park and Hubbell Trading Post National Historic Site allow visitors a glimpse into the Navajo way of life. Archaeological treasures are abound at Petrified Forest National Park.

There are tour companies that specialize in everything from helicopters trips to white water rafting expeditions.

Bus Tours Flagstaff Express(+1 928 225 2290) Tour West America(+1 800 900 8687)

Helicopter Tours Maverick Helicopter Tours(+1 866 689 8687/http://www.maverickhelicopter.com/) Papillon Grand Canyon Helicopter Tours(+1 800 528 2418/http://www.papillon.com/)

Adventure Tours Open Road Tours(+1 877 226 8060/http://www.openroadtours.com/flagstaff/) Great Ventures Tours(+1 800 578 2643/http://www.greatventures.com/)
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Travel Tips

Getting There

Air

Flagstaff-Pulliam Regional Airport(FLG)+1 928 556 1234

FLG is located three miles south of the city and services the following airlines:

US Airways(+1 800 428 4322/http://www.usairways.com)

From the Airport

Transportation options to and from the airport are limited. From the airport, taxi providers and rental cars are the best means of transportation.

Taxi: A Friendly Cab(+1 928 774 4444) Alternative Taxi(+1 928 213 1111) A-1 Quick Cab& Tours(+1 928 214 8294) Arizona Taxi& Tours(+1 928 779 1111)

Car Rental: Avis(+1 800 831 2847/http://www.avis.com) Enterprise(1+ 800 736 8227/http://www.enterprise.com/car_rental/home) Budget(+1 800 527 0700/http://www.budget.com) Hertz(+1 800 654 3131/http://www.hertz.com)

Train

Amtrak(+1 800 872 7245/http://www.amtrak.com) offers services to Flagstaff.

Bus

Flagstaff is serviced by Greyhound(+1 800 231 2222/http://www.greyhound.com) which provides transportation to destinations throughout America.

Car

Flagstaff is easily accessible from I-17, I-40 and US Highways 66, 89, 180, and 487.

Getting Around

Bus

Mountain Lion Transit(+1 928 779 6624) provides a bus service around the city six days a week and Northern Arizona University provides service on their MCT(+1 928 523 5052) shuttles five days a week. One of the most effective ways to view the region is via private or group tour.

If traveling overseas, take the safety precaution of registering your trip athttps://travelregistration.state.gov and for helpful, practical advice about traveling technicalities and safety standards check outhttp://travel.state.gov/
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Fun Facts

Flagstaff

State: Arizona

Country: United States

Flagstaff by the Numbers:

Population: 52,894

Elevation: 7000 feet

Annual Rainfall: 23 inches

Annual Snowfall: 110 inches

Average Winter Temperature: 29 degrees F

Average Summer Temperature: 66 degrees F

Quick Facts:

Electricity: 110 volts, 60Hz, standard two pin plugs

Time Zone: GMT-7

Country Dialing Code: 1

Area Code: 928

Did You Know?

Edward Whipple, a saloon owner, first settled Flagstaff in 1871. Flagstaff is home to Northern Arizona University and the world famous Lowell Observatory where Pluto was discovered in 1930.

Orientation:

Flagstaff is located off the infamous US Route 66 and seated on the Colorado Plateau. A gateway to the Grand Canyon, Flagstaff is located about 100 miles away from the southern rim. From Flagstaff to Phoenix is a two-hour drive, so plan accordingly.
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