



nileGUIDE

ALL YOU NEED TO PLAN YOUR PERFECT TRIP



Weekend in Flagstaff: The Ultimate Weekend in the Mountains

Flagstaff, 3 Days

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Guide Description



AUTHOR NOTE: This trip is designed for the drive-by traveler looking to experience rich culture and vast wilderness of Flagstaff. Upon arriving in Flagstaff on a Friday night, travelers will want a good meal and a chance to poke around the historic downtown area. The first Friday of every month is the town's "art walk." Timing a visit around these dates will offer visitors a chance to see original art and the best live music Flagstaff has to offer. The first full day will be spent outdoors as much as possible. An 8-mile loop along the base of the San Francisco Peaks offers visitors a chance to get to know the physical landscape of Flagstaff and even go swimming. The next day visitors will explore surrounding landscapes through a historical tour of Anazazi ruins, cliff dwellings, and extinct volcanoes. All the while, visitors will eat great food, drink local beer, and sleep in a haunted hotel!

Itinerary Overview

things to do
restaurants
hotels
nightlife

Day 1 - Flagstaff

DAY NOTE: When you arrive in Flagstaff, the first thing you'll want is a good meal. Mountain Oasis, located downtown on Aspen, across the street from Heritage Square, is a great place to enjoy good American and Italian fare. Have some wine and watch the people on the street from your table. The Hotel Monte Vista is just a few blocks, east of the restaurant where you can enjoy a few cocktails in the Lounge before heading upstairs. On the weekends, the Monte Vista Lounge, or the "Monte V" to the locals, or "The "V", as it is referred to by the hipsters, offers live music every weekend. The hotel, they say, which has been around since the early 1900's, is haunted.



Mountain Oasis International Restaurant
Mountain-style Middle Eastern and Mediterranean



Hotel Monte Vista
Historic downtown hotel

Day 2 - Flagstaff

DAY NOTE: For breakfast, La Bellavia is located south of the tracks on Beaver St. Make your own omelet or try any one of their fantastic choices of pancakes. Their coffee is good, but coffee lovers might enjoy Macy's European Coffee House & Bakery, which makes numerous varieties of espresso drinks. Our journey begins at the Rocky Ridge trailhead off of Schultz Pass Rd. Most of the year, most cars should be able to manage the road, but if it's muddy, don't risk it without a 4x4. Before you get to the trailhead, however, make sure you have plenty of water. High altitude hiking is extremely dehydrating, especially for those not acclimated. Bring at least 2 liters of water per person. It would also help to bring a map just in case. In any of the wilderness stores downtown, you may find a "Flagstaff Trails Map;" they are \$10 but they're printed on high quality water-proof paper. Quality topography maps can also be found here: <http://singletrack.us/gallery/displayimage.php?pid=3976&fullsize=1> As you begin your journey, keep in mind that this is a popular mountain bike trail too – and a difficult one at that—make sure you give bikes the right-of-way. This trail received its name for good reason. While the towering rock and pine top views easily avert your gaze away from the trail, watch out for rocks and boulders along the way. When you get to a fork in the road, stay to the left. The Rocky Ridge Trail continues to the right and leads to Buffalo Park, but this guide leads north to Dry Lakes on an unmarked trail known as Lost Burrito. Follow the trail to an open prairie, the site of an old Ranch called Dry Lakes. Most of the year, this pond is, indeed, dry. However, after much precipitation in late summer, this small pond is full of water and teeming with life: frogs, cranes, and salamander. You should also be able to see hoof prints from

elk and deer as well as the paws of raccoon, rabbit, and squirrel checker the flood plain. Continue hiking on either side of the pond and back into the forest. Stay to the left, but be sure not to take the first left turn you see at the pond – go past this trail around an old fence and into the forest. This trail is not labeled either, but it is known as the Little Gnarly Trail. This stretch of trail is beautiful, with aspens, evergreens, and wildflowers. Continue to the left through two forks in the trail. You should be heading north or northeast. Now stay to the right through one more fork and you should arrive back on Schultz Pass Rd. Here, keep right and find the trailhead for the Sunset Trail and keep your eyes open for Schultz Tank. This is a beautiful remote pond that is full year round and particularly full in the late spring and late summer. This is a great, quiet spot to go for a swim. The water will be chilly, but on hot days, a quick dip is completely worth it. From Schultz Tank, jump back on the Sunset Trail, and follow it south for quite a while. The Upper Brookbank Trail should appear on the right and there is a well-marked sign. There is a trail to the right just before the Brookbank Trail, but don't be fooled. Follow the Upper Brookbank Trail along a scenic ridge and around a small hill. Continue onto the Lower Brookbank Trail and follow it back to the Rocky Ridge Trail. Stay on the Rocky Ridge Trail for a mile or so and soon you'll arrive where you started. In Flagstaff, its hip to walk in to casual dining restaurants in your dusty hiking boots, so don't worry about going back to the hotel right away. You're going to need some food. A great place to after a long day in the woods is Beaver Street Brewing Company. In particular, an R & R Oatmeal Stout hits the spot with a wood fired veggie pizza known as the "Enchanted Forest." Don't worry, your hotel, the Hotel Monte Vista, is within walking distance from Beaver Street Brewing Company, so don't be afraid to try the other microbrews on draught.



Schultz Pass Road Scenic Drive
Spectacular views



La Bellavia Restaurant
Six-time best breakfast winner



Sunset Trail



Brookbank Trail
Rocky 2.5 mile trail



Beaver Street Brewery and Whistle Stop Cafe
Award-winning pub

Itinerary Overview

things to do
restaurants
hotels
nightlife



Hotel Monte Vista
Historic downtown hotel



Sunset Crater Volcano National Monument
Most recently active volcano in the region

Day 3 - Flagstaff

DAY NOTE: Rise early and go across San Francisco Street to Late For The Train. They've got the best double shots of espresso in town. They also offer a variety of pastries that are good to take on the road. Today our trip to Flagstaff will take us on a brief geological and anthropological history lesson that will provide a taste of the diverse terrain in the surrounding area and how it was formed as well as who inhabited the area and how they lived. Our first stop is about 8 miles out of town. Drive East on 40 until you see the Park's Department's sign for Walnut Canyon. The reason for it's name will be obvious when you see it. Not only do the cliff walls resemble the colors of walnut, but black walnut trees are all over the place. Take the Island Trail along a cliff and gaze back in time at the cliff dwellings tucked within the wedges in the cliff. The trail hugs the edge of this peninsula as visitors are allowed to walk in and out of the dwellings. In some spots, between the bricks, you can even see finger markings made when the mud was packed. You'll want a good couple hours here. Next, get back on the highway take the first exit that has anything to do with 89 or Route 66. Take it and head north. Route 66 turns into 89, which will take us to Sunset Crater and the Wupatki Anasazi ruins, both of which can be accessed by turning right on Forest Rd. 545, about 40 miles north. Drive past the Bonito Campgrounds and follow the signs to Sunset Crater. This is an eerie place, covered in shiny black obsidian and recovering plant life. Take the Lava Flow Trail, an easy one-mile loop that takes hikers right up to the base of the small volcano. When the volcano erupted between 1040 and 1100, it dramatically altered the physical and cultural landscape. Continue to Wupatki National Monument by continuing on Forest Rd. 545. Just follow the signs. Before Sunset Crater erupted, Wupatki was the largest pueblo community in the area. There is a visitor's center that share a parking lot with the Wupatki ruins, where you can learn more about the original structure and the people that lived there. From Wupatki, Forest Rd. 545 will take you to other structures, Lomaki and Box Canyon Pueblos as well as the Citadel and Nalakihi. If you time it right, the top of the Citadel at sunset is one of the most beautiful places in the area. Even without the sunset, the top of the Citadel provides spectacular views of the entire San Francisco Peaks mountain range. Forest Rd. 545 leads back to 89. Take it south back to Flagstaff.



Walnut Canyon National Monument
Canyons and Cliff Dwellings

Day 1 - Flagstaff

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contact:

tel: +1 928 214 9270

fax: +1 928 214 0020

<http://www.themenuplease.com/mountainoasis/>

location:

11 East Aspen Ave
Flagstaff AZ 86001

hours:

Su-Th 7a-9p ; F-Sa 7a-10p

1 Mountain Oasis International Restaurant

DESCRIPTION: This vegetarian- and vegan-friendly downtown Flagstaff eatery features an eclectic menu of Asian, Italian, Middle Eastern and Mediterranean inspired dishes, including wraps, sandwiches, salads, and baked goods. This is the perfect place for healthy eaters to nosh on light yet tasty fare, such as the popular and irresistible pineapple tofu salad. But meat-lovers should not despair, as there are plenty of filling, hearty dishes on the menu, including the reliably good spaghetti and meatballs, the savory teriyaki salmon special, and Cantonese pasta with chicken. The wide selection of flavors and menu dishes makes this a perfect stop for groups looking for a downtown restaurant with something to please all palates.

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editor

contact:

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<http://www.hotelmontevista.com>

location:

100 N San Francisco St
Flagstaff AZ 86001

2 Hotel Monte Vista

DESCRIPTION: One block north of historic Route 66, towering over the corner of Aspen & San Francisco, the Hotel Monte Vista has been a downtown Flagstaff touchstone for decades. Built in 1927 by a citizen's initiative to bring tourist-class amenities to town, the hotel has hosted Hollywood luminaries, rock legends, and according to some guests, an assorted cast of ghosts that haunt the halls and keep things interesting. The Hotel Monte Vista has 50 rooms and suites on four floors, many offering great views of Flagstaff. Although by no means swanky, the hotel has a comfortable vintage vibe and offers a great location for walking around downtown Flagstaff.

© NileGuide



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Day 2 - Flagstaff

QUICK NOTE

DAY NOTE: For breakfast, La Bellavia is located south of the tracks on Beaver St. Make your own omelet or try any one of their fantastic choices of pancakes. Their coffee is good, but coffee lovers might enjoy Macy's European Coffee House & Bakery, which makes numerous varieties of espresso drinks. Our journey begins at the Rocky Ridge trailhead off of Schultz Pass Rd. Most of the year, most cars should be able to manage the road, but if it's muddy, don't risk it without a 4x4. Before you get to the trailhead, however, make sure you have plenty of water. High altitude hiking is extremely dehydrating, especially for those not acclimated. Bring at least 2 liters of water per person. It would also help to bring a map just in case. In any of the wilderness stores downtown, you may find a "Flagstaff Trails Map;" they are \$10 but they're printed on high quality water-proof paper. Quality topography maps can also be found here: <http://singletrack.us/gallery/displayimage.php?pid=3976&fullsize=1> As you begin your journey, keep in mind that this is a popular mountain bike trail too – and a difficult one at that—make sure you give bikes the right-of-way. This trail received its name for good reason. While the towering rock and pine top views easily avert your gaze away from the trail, watch out for rocks and boulders along the way. When you get to a fork in the road, stay to the left. The Rocky Ridge Trail continues to the right and leads to Buffalo Park, but this guide leads north to Dry Lakes on an unmarked trail known as Lost Burrito. Follow the trail to an open prairie, the site of an old Ranch called Dry Lakes. Most of the year, this pond is, indeed, dry. However, after much precipitation in late summer, this small pond is full of water and teeming with life: frogs, cranes, and salamander. You should also be able to see hoof prints from elk and deer as well as the paws of raccoon, rabbit, and squirrel checker the flood plain. Continue hiking on either side of the pond and back into the forest. Stay to the left, but be sure not to take the first left turn you see at the pond – go past this trail around an old fence and into the forest. This trail is not labeled either, but it is known as the Little Gnarly Trail. This stretch of trail is beautiful, with aspens, evergreens, and wildflowers. Continue to the left through two forks in the trail. You should be heading north or northeast. Now stay to the right through one more fork and you should arrive back on Schultz Pass Rd. Here, keep right and find the trailhead for the Sunset Trail and keep your eyes open for Schultz Tank. This is a beautiful remote pond that is full year round and particularly full in the late spring and late summer. This is a great, quiet spot to go for a swim. The water will be chilly, but on hot days, a quick dip is completely worth it. From Schultz Tank, jump back on the Sunset Trail, and follow it south for quite a while. The Upper Brookbank Trail should appear on the right and there is a well-marked sign. There is a trail to the right just before the Brookbank Trail, but don't be fooled. Follow the Upper Brookbank Trail along a scenic ridge and around a small hill. Continue onto the Lower Brookbank Trail and follow it back to the Rocky Ridge Trail. Stay on the Rocky Ridge Trail for a mile or so and soon you'll arrive where you started. In Flagstaff, it's hip to walk in to casual dining restaurants in your dusty hiking boots, so don't worry about going back to the hotel right away. You're going to need some food. A great place to after a long day in the woods is Beaver Street Brewing Company. In particular, an R & R Oatmeal Stout hits the spot with a wood fired veggie pizza known as the "Enchanted Forest." Don't worry, your hotel, the Hotel Monte Vista, is within walking distance from Beaver Street Brewing Company, so don't be afraid to try the other microbrews on draught.

contact:
tel: +1 928 774 9541
(Flagstaff Visitor Center)

location:
Schultz Pass Road
Flagstaff AZ 86001

hours:
24 hrs

1 Schultz Pass Road Scenic Drive

DESCRIPTION: Be sure that your vehicle is in peak operating condition and that the unpaved path is in passable shape, and you're off on an exciting driving adventure! This dirt road rambles through the San Francisco Peaks and Elden Mountain range on its bisecting way between US Route 180 and US Route 89. Along the way, you'll see some of the area's most spectacular scenery from spots that are rarely trod upon by the average visitor. But remember, you'll be traveling some tough terrain, so be sure both you and your vehicle are up to the task. Contact the Flagstaff Visitor Center for more information. © wcities.com

contact:

tel: +1 928 774 8301
http://national.citysearch.com
/profile/external/1762892/flag
staff_az/la_bellavia_restauran
t.html

location:

18 S Beaver St
Flagstaff AZ 86001

hours:

Daily 6:30a-2:30p

2 La Bellavia Restaurant

DESCRIPTION: This is one of Flagstaff's favorite breakfast and lunch spots, and if you're willing to brave long lines (especially prevalent on the weekends), you won't be disappointed by the extensive menu of all your breakfast favorites, which includes nine delicious variations on Eggs Benedict and their popular Trout Breakfast. Owners Ed and Brandy Wojciak, who also own Brandy's on the east side, also serve up a scrumptious lunch menu of specialty sandwiches, quiches, burgers, and salads. The daily lunch specials offer a classic sandwich with a cup of soup for a good price. With lacy white curtains and a relaxed yet always-busy atmosphere, La Bellavia is a sound choice for good eats in downtown Flagstaff.
© NileGuide



Francis Storr/Flickr

contact:

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

location:

5075 N. Highway 89
Flagstaff AZ 86004

3 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.

contact:

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

location:

5075 N. Highway 89
Flagstaff AZ 86004

4 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

contact:

tel: 928 779 0079

fax: 928 779 0029

<http://www.beaverstreetbrewery.com/>

location:

11 South Beaver St
Flagstaff AZ 86001

hours:

Bar & Restaurant Su-Th
11:30a-11p, 11:30a-12a Fr &
Sa; Brew & Cue 11:30a-1a
Su-We, 11:30a-2a Th-Sa

5 Beaver Street Brewery and Whistle Stop Cafe

DESCRIPTION: Located one block south of the train station in downtown Flagstaff, Beaver Street Brewery & Whistle Stop Cafe is a local favorite brewery and restaurant with a bright, family-friendly pub atmosphere. The menu is heavy on reliably tasty dishes, including hefty sandwiches with generous servings of fries on the side, fresh salads, yummy fondues, and their popular wood-fired pizzas. Try the Enchanted Forest pie, loaded with Brie, roasted red peppers, spinach, Portobello mushrooms, and artichoke pesto on a chewy, warm crust. Watch the flames fly from your table as chefs prepare meals in the open kitchen, or take a gander as the brewer creates handcrafted ales. Time your visit for late spring and summer, and sit outdoors in the comfortable beer garden. If you're looking for a casual, fun dining spot around downtown, Beaver Street Brewery & Whistle Stop Cafe is always a solid choice.

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contact:

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<http://www.hotelmontevista.com>

location:

100 N San Francisco St
Flagstaff AZ 86001

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© NileGuide



editor

Day 3 - Flagstaff

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contact:

tel: 928 527-1246

fax: +1 928 526-4259

<http://www.nps.gov/waca/>

location:

Flagstaff Areas

Flagstaff AZ 86002

hours:

May-Oct daily 8am-5pm; Nov-

Apr daily 9am-5pm

1 Walnut Canyon National Monument

OUR LOCAL EXPERT SAYS:

The Island Trail can be quite strenuous, descending 185 vertical feet into the canyon. Take precautions with comfortable shoes and bring water. For an easier walk, stay above the rim on the Rim Trail.

DESCRIPTION: Located about eight miles southeast of Flagstaff off I-40, Walnut Canyon National Monument offers a fascinating peek into the lives of the people anthropologists have named the Sinagua ("without water"). A strenuous, one-mile walk on the Island Trail gives you a front-row glimpse to the 700-year old cliff dwellings where the Sinagua lived and left their mark. Peer into the past as you take in the 25 cliff dwellings along the trail. You can see more dwellings across the canyon. Even if you are not transfixed by the mystery of the people who built this cliffside pueblo, the lush canyon is the perfect high desert backdrop for your Northern Arizona adventure. The canyon is a valuable habitat for many species of plants and animals, and a gorgeous backdrop for photographers of all stripes.

© NileGuide



Ken Lund/Flickr

contact:

tel: 520-556-7134
www.nps.gov/sucr/

location:

Flagstaff Areas
Flagstaff AZ 86002

hours:

Daily sunrise-sunset;
visitor center daily May-Oct
8am-5pm, Nov-Apr 9am-5pm



Sunset Crater Volcano National Monument

DESCRIPTION: Between 1040 and 1100, this volcano exploded, powerfully affecting the lives of local peoples and forever altering the landscape of the surrounding area. Today you can drive right up to the site, where shiny black molten rock covers this area, as if it erupted just yesterday. Take the Lava Flow trail to see the life slowly returning to this rugged landscape. The fee is \$5. Take U.S 89 north for 12 miles, turn right on the Sunset Crater/Wupatki Loop road and continue 2 miles (3km) to the visitor center. This loop road makes it convenient to see the nearby Wupatki Ruins on the same day.
© NileGuide



Sunset Crater Volcano National Monument

Flagstaff Snapshot

Local Info

Surrounded by the tall Ponderosa Pines of the Coconino 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 to Sedona, 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. The Flagstaff 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 autos shops 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 the Orpheum Theater, and plenty of regional and ethnic eateries to keep you happily fed. Stay in the thick of it at the historic Hotel Monte Vista, just a block north of Route 66, and head to Heritage 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 of Northern 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-preserved Riordan 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 is Lowell 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 the Coconino 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, the Museum 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 of Walnut 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.

© NileGuide

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

Flagstaff Snapshot continued

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 shepherd 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 movie *Casablanca*, 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 ambiance 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.

Flagstaff Snapshot continued

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. Stromboli'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 genteel 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 by Bartender Magazine, is one of Car & 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.

©

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 to 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 Stromboli'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 offers 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.

Flagstaff Snapshot continued

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 at <https://travelregistration.state.gov> and for helpful, practical advice about traveling

technicalities and safety standards check out <http://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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