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ALL YOU NEED TO PLAN YOUR PERFECT TRIP



Matthew Yglesias

# Two Days of Air, Space and Science

## **Tucson, 2 Days**

### Table of contents:

- Guide Description 2
- Itinerary Overview 3
- Daily Itineraries 4
- Tucson Snapshot 9

# Guide Description

**AUTHOR NOTE:** Thanks to a large research university, a U.S. Air Force base, clear and dark skies, deep veins of copper and a long rich history, science, military and history buffs could spend at least a couple of days exploring the area.

# Itinerary Overview

things to do  
restaurants  
hotels  
nightlife

## Day 1 - Tucson

**DAY NOTE:** Start your day early at the Kitt Peak National Observatory southwest of Tucson. The observatory has daily tours and a nightly viewing program that requires reservations, sometimes weeks in advance. From Kitt Peak head back toward Tucson. Turn south on Interstate 19. Your next stop is the Mission San Xavier del Bac. Then head further south down Interstate 19 a few miles to the Asarco Mineral Discovery Center to learn about mining and its history and environmental consequences. From there, get on I-19 again heading south to the Titan Missile Museum, and tour the only Titan II missile site in the U.S. Then head back to Tucson for dinner at Feast. This small restaurant has a wine bar and some of the best food in Tucson. Spend the night at the nearby and completely charming Lodge on the Desert.



**Mission San Xavier del Bac**  
The Jewel in Tucson's Crown



**Asarco Mineral Discovery Center**  
The history of open-pit copper mining



**Titan Missile Museum**  
Ballistic missile on display



**Kitt Peak National Observatory**  
Stargazing with astronomers



**Feast**  
A feast for your tastebuds



**Lodge On The Desert**  
Centrally located desert oasis

is more generic compared to the original location, but the food is just as good.



**Arizona State Museum**  
The history of the Southwest



**Flandrau Science Center and Planetarium**  
Gaze at the night skies in wonder



**Nimbus Brewing Company**  
Arizona's largest microbrewery



**Environmental Research Lab**  
Environmental research lab



**Pima Air and Space Museum**  
The "boneyard" for flying machines



**El Charro Cafe**  
Culinary landmark in downtown Tucson

## Day 2 - Tucson

**DAY NOTE:** There's a lot less driving on Day Two. Head toward the University of Arizona and the Arizona State Museum in the morning. From the museum it's an easy walk across campus to the Flandrau Science Center and Planetarium. For lunch head to the Nimbus Brewing Company for a microbrew and a burger. Then head to the Environmental Research Lab run by the University of Arizona. End the day at the Pima Air and Space Museum, one of the largest air and space museums in the world. Have dinner at one of the most popular Mexican restaurants in Tucson, El Charro. The main restaurant, started in 1922, is Downtown, but there are a couple of branch locations between the air and space museum and the Lodge on the Desert. The look

# Day 1 - Tucson

## QUICK NOTE

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### contact:

tel: 520 294 2624

fax: +1 520 294 3438

<http://www.sanxaviermission.org/>

### location:

1950 W. San Xavier Rd  
Tucson AZ 85746

### hours:

Daily 8am-5pm

1

## Mission San Xavier del Bac

**DESCRIPTION:** The Mission San Xavier del Bac, also called the White Dove of the Desert, is nearly as iconic an image to Tucson as sunsets and saguaros. Built between 1783 and 1797, San Xavier del Bac is still an active Roman Catholic church for Tohono O'odham on the San Xavier Indian Reservation. The mission weaves together Moorish, Byzantine and Mexican Renaissance styles and is considered one of the finest examples of Spanish colonial architecture in the United States. The Mission San Xavier de Bac should be at or near the top of any visitor's list. © NileGuide



Ken Lund

### contact:

tel: 520 625 7513

fax: 520- 625 4756

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

### location:

1421 West Pima Mine Road  
Sahuarita AZ 85629

### hours:

Tu-Sa 9a-4p

2

## Asarco Mineral Discovery Center

**DESCRIPTION:** Whether you're opposed to open-pit copper mine and its environmental consequences or not, visiting this facility will leave you more knowledgeable about what was once one of the main industries in the state of Arizona. The earth science exhibits and displays of historic mining equipment are quite impressive, and you might want to view the multimedia shows before going on a tour of ASARCO's Mission open-pit mine. © wcities.com

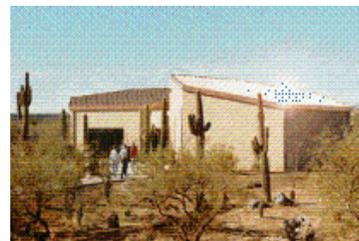


Photo courtesy of Asarco Mineral Discovery Center

### contact:

tel: 520 625 7736

<http://www.pimaair.org/>

### location:

1580 W. Duval Mine Rd  
Sahuarita AZ 85629

### hours:

9a-5p W-Su May-Oct, 9a-5p  
Nov-April

3

## Titan Missile Museum

**DESCRIPTION:** Here's a museum south of Tucson that must surely be considered unique; a chilly reminder of the Cold War. Go underground and see one of the old Titan ballistic missiles, watch the roll-back silo door open, follow operations at the launch control center, and watch demonstrations of countdown procedures. Tours begin every half hour. To get here, go south on Interstate 19 and take exit 69 to the Duval Mine Road and follow the signs. © wcities.com



Photo courtesy of Titan Missile Museum

**contact:**

tel: 520 318 8726  
fax: +1 520 318 8451  
<http://www.noao.edu/outreach/kpvc>

**location:**

Highway 86 and Junction 386  
Tucson AZ 86534

**hours:**

9a-3:45p daily, Tours:  
10a, 11:30a & 1:30p daily,  
reservations required for  
nighttime viewing

**4 Kitt Peak National Observatory**

**DESCRIPTION:** Southern Arizona's clear, dark skies have made Tucson an important center for Astronomy. Because of light pollution, the skies aren't as dark as they once were, but there is still plenty to offer to astronomy buffs. On the Tohono O'odham Nation fifty-five miles southwest of Tucson on a peak in the Quinlan Mountains sits Kitt Peak National Observatory. Here, is the world's largest collection of optical telescopes. There are daytime tours and nighttime programs that allow viewing through a 20-inch telescope. © NileGuide



Photo courtesy of Kitt Peak National Observatory

**contact:**

tel: 520 326 6500 / 520 326  
9363 / 520 326 8383  
fax: 520 326 9245  
<http://www.eatatfeast.com>

**location:**

4122 East Speedway  
Tucson AZ 85712

**hours:**

11a-9p Tu-Su

**5 Feast**

**DESCRIPTION:** This looks like a casual unassuming bistro, so you may be caught off guard by the sheer inventiveness of the gourmet dishes you'll encounter while dining here. Food is displayed behind a glass case, guests pick out their order, pay at the counter, and then once the dish has been served and prepared, it's brought to your table. Many in-the-know customers check the daily specials online, and then call in their order. Feast, Tucson's premier gourmet-to-go restaurant, has earned a loyal following with customers who appreciate the eclectic menu.  
© NileGuide



Feast

**contact:**

tel: +1 520 325 3366 / +1 800  
456 5634  
fax: +1 520 327 5834  
<http://www.lodgeonthedesert.com>

**location:**

306 North Alvernon Way  
Tucson AZ 85711

**6 Lodge On The Desert**

**DESCRIPTION:** Built in 1936 and completely renovated in 1997, this hacienda style hotel is a desert oasis, offering rooms and suites in a quiet residential setting. Guests enjoy well-manicured lawns, flower gardens and cactus gardens - all from a convenient central location. Most rooms have fireplaces and private patios. Rates for lodging in Tucson are usually considerably lower during summer months than they are during the winter season, so be advised to call in advance for current rate information. © wcities.com



wcities

# Day 2 - Tucson

## QUICK NOTE

**DAY NOTE:** There's a lot less driving on Day Two. Head toward the University of Arizona and the Arizona State Museum in the morning. From the museum it's an easy walk across campus to the Flandrau Science Center and Planetarium. For lunch head to the Nimbus Brewing Company for a microbrew and a burger. Then head to the Environmental Research Lab run by the University of Arizona. End the day at the Pima Air and Space Museum, one of the largest air and space museums in the world. Have dinner at one of the most popular Mexican restaurants in Tucson, El Charro. The main restaurant, started in 1922, is Downtown, but there are a couple of branch locations between the air and space museum and the Lodge on the Desert. The look is more generic compared to the original location, but the food is just as good.

### contact:

tel: 520 621 6302

fax: 520- 621 2976

<http://www.statemuseum.arizona.edu>

### location:

1013 E. University Blvd  
Tucson AZ 85721

### hours:

8a-5p M-F

## 1 Arizona State Museum

**DESCRIPTION:** This museum, which is the oldest anthropological museum in the Southwest, houses Paths of Life: American Indians of the Southwest, one of the state's most interesting exhibits on prehistoric and contemporary Native American cultures of the Southwest. The exhibit focuses on 10 different tribes from around the Southwest and northern Mexico, not only displaying a wide range of artifacts, but also exploring the lifestyles and cultural traditions of Indians living in the region today. In addition, the museum showcases a collection of some 20,000 ceramic pieces. This pottery spans 2,000 years of life in the desert Southwest. © Frommer's



wcities

### contact:

tel: (520) 621-STAR

<http://www.flandrau.org>

### location:

1601 E. University Blvd  
Tucson AZ 85719

### hours:

Thurs-Fri 9am-3pm and  
6-9pm; Sat noon-9pm; Sun  
noon-5pm. Telescope viewing  
(weather permitting) Wed-Sat  
7-10pm

## 2 Flandrau Science Center and Planetarium

### OUR LOCAL EXPERT SAYS:

For kids, the "Legends of the Night Skies" show on Thursdays and Sundays is a blast.

**DESCRIPTION:** The Flandrau Science Center and Planetarium is located on the campus of the University of Arizona in Tucson, at the northeast corner of Cherry Avenue and University. This family-friendly center is open seven days a week, with planetarium shows available to school and youth groups on the weekdays, and to the general public on Thursday, Friday, Saturday, and Sunday evenings. The family laser light show happens on Thursday nights, while Friday through Sundays is generally reserved for the very popular Pink Floyd laser music show. This is a great place to take the kids, or to spend an evening marveling at the night skies and learning the stories behind the constellations.  
© NileGuide



editor

**contact:**  
tel: 520 745 9175  
fax: +1 520 584 0906  
<http://www.nimbusbeer.com/>

**location:**  
3850 East 44th Street  
Tucson AZ 85713-5472

**hours:**  
11a-11p M-Th, 11a-1a F-Sa,  
noon-9p Su

### 3 Nimbus Brewing Company

#### OUR LOCAL EXPERT SAYS:

There's a cover charge on live music nights, but most Sunday concerts are free.

**DESCRIPTION:** Nimbus Brewing Company produces Tucson's own homegrown classic ales, which are immediately recognizable around town by the friendly-looking monkey on the label. The restaurant portion of the brewery serves up delectable gourmet pizzas straight out of their wood-fired oven. Pool tables, large high-definition TVs, and an outdoor patio add to the feeling of conviviality that pervades this popular brewery, restaurant, and hang-out destination on any given night. © NileGuide



Photo courtesy of Nimbus Brewing Company

**contact:**  
tel: 520 626 3322  
fax: 520- 573 0852  
<http://ag.arizona.edu/azaqua/erlhome.html>

**location:**  
2601 East Airport Drive  
Tucson AZ 85706

**hours:**  
8:30a-5p M-F

### 4 Environmental Research Lab

**DESCRIPTION:** As Tucson receives more sunshine per year than any other city in the U.S., this is the place for research on the use of solar energy. Located conveniently next to the airport, the Environmental Research Lab features a solar oasis as well as educational exhibits on homebuilding in the desert, particularly energy-saving cooling and heating technology. Free tours are available the first Tuesday of every month. © wcities.com



Photo courtesy of Environmental Research Lab

**contact:**  
tel: 520 574 0462  
fax: 520- 574 9238  
<http://www.pimaair.org>

**location:**  
6000 E. Valencia Rd  
Tucson AZ 85706

**hours:**  
Daily 9am-5pm

### 5 Pima Air and Space Museum

**DESCRIPTION:** Dedicated to the preservation of the history of flight, the Pima Air and Space Museum houses over 27 historic aircraft, including John F. Kennedy's Air Force One, once used by Presidents Kennedy, Johnson and Nixon. Also on display is the X-15 and Russian Migs, among many, many others. The museum is located next to the Davis Monthan Air Force Base, which also houses the Arizona Maintenance and Regeneration Center, also known as "the boneyard." Here, lined up neatly and surreally are hundreds of mothballed military aircraft. © NileGuide



hyku

**contact:**  
tel: 520 622 1922  
<http://www.elcharrocafe.com/>

**location:**  
311 North Court Avenue  
Tucson AZ 85701

**hours:**

### 6 El Charro Cafe

**DESCRIPTION:** El Charro Cafe has opened several locations throughout the Tucson area, but the downtown location on Court Avenue remains a favorite for locals and visitors seeking an authentic Tucson dining experience. Established in 1922, El Charro famously bills itself as the oldest family-run Mexican restaurant in continuous operation in the United States. It's



editor

Mon-Sun, 10am-9pm

not hard to see why the restaurant has survived for so many decades: the menu blends classic, never-out-of-style Sonoran-style cooking with Tucson-style Mexican creations. A local favorite, and perhaps the unofficial dish of Tucson, is the Carne Seca plate (literally "dried meat"), marinated lean Angus beef that is dried beneath the Sonoran sun, and then shredded & flash-grilled with green chile, tomato & onions. Served with guacamole, Pico de Charro salsa, beans or rice, and handmade flour or corn tortillas. If this sounds like your kind of dish, eat up while you're here. You'll be hard-pressed to find Carne Seca on any menu outside of Tucson. © NileGuide User

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# Tucson Snapshot

## Local Info

Tucson is a striking amalgamation of old and new, blending historic roots with its contemporary identity as a vibrant college town, winter refuge for cold-weather retirees, and one of the Southwest's fastest-growing cities. The Old Pueblo, as locals affectionately call Tucson, is indeed one of the oldest continually inhabited areas in the United States, surviving for more than 4,000 years as home to Hohokam farmers, 17th century European explorers, Mexican Territorial settlers, and pre-statehood, Old West pioneers. Situated in the heart of the Sonoran Desert, Tucson is surrounded by mountain ranges and canyons, green forests of tall Saguaro cacti, and dry river washes that come alive with rushing water after the first monsoon storm of the summer.

Today, Tucson is home to historic Mexican barrios and well-preserved mid-century neighborhoods, strip malls and heavily-trafficked avenues, funky bars, restaurants, and shops, posh golf resorts, and like many other Sunbelt cities, suburban sprawl. It's also home to the theUniversity of Arizona, Old Tucson Studios, Davis-Monthan Air Force Base, theArizona-Sonora Desert Museum, andSaguaro National Park. But no matter what side of Tucson you seek out, the singular beauty of the Sonoran Desert and the city's own history offers up a consistently compelling mix of past and present.

## Downtown

Downtown is a cluster of historic barrios, government buildings, art galleries, and newly-risen high-rise condos. The city's much-hyped Rio Nuevo downtown redevelopment and renewal project has been stalled for years, but downtown already offers plenty to see and do. Downtown Tucson is home to a network of historic, still-standing neighborhoods of colorful 19th century adobes and Victorian mansions. Mesquite tree-lined downtown neighborhoods such as theBarrio Viejo, El Presidio, andArmory Park are full of color and eye-grabbing architecture that are quintessentially Tucson, and must-see for out-of-towners.

In the northern downtown quarter, art lovers will appreciate theTucson Museum of Art an the shops and galleries of the historic

Old Town Artisans marketplace. Visitors with even a passing interest in history should check out remnants of the original Tucson Presidio settlement. The originalEl Charro Cafe, one of the oldest family-run Mexican restaurants in the United States, is a popular lunch and dinner spot on Court Avenue.

Busy Congress Street is the main downtown artery, with landmarks that include theHotel Congress,Rialto Theatre, and the historicFox Theater, which hosts arts performances and repertory film screenings. Other downtown landmarks include the Tucson Convention Center, La Placita, theTemple of Music and Art, and the historicSt. Augustine Cathedral.

## South Tucson

Just south of downtown is the small municipality of South Tucson, a largely Latino area with deep community roots. Here you'll find great examples of Tucson mural art and some of the best Mexican restaurants in the city. Dozens of taquerias, sit-down restaurants, Mexican bakeries and groceries, and old-fashioned motor motels line the streets along Fourth, Sixth, and Twelfth Avenues, making this a hotspot for foodies on the look-out for the next great culinary find. South Tucson restaurants such asMi Nidito,Michas,Taqueria Pico de Gallo, andEl Guero Canelo have already been enshrined in the increasingly crowded pantheon of treasured local Mexican eateries.

Traveling further south and west of the Tucson city limits, you'll enter parts of the Tohono O'odham Nation, including the Tohono O'odham San Xavier reservation, home to the magnificentMission San Xavier del Bac. The mission was founded in 1699 by the Jesuit missionary Eusebio Francisco Kino and features an elegant, white Moorish-inspired design with hand-carved mesquite doors and an elaborate altar. The mission, also known as the White Dove of the Desert, still serves the San Xavier community, offering daily mass and celebrations. The plaza has a small market place where visitors can purchase fry bread and artisan crafts.

## West Tucson

West Tucson generally refers to the neighborhoods on the western side of Interstate 10. The area is comprised of

several historic Latino neighborhoods, and is home toSentinel Peak(often referred to as A Mountain), which offers panoramic views of the city. Foodies have much to enjoy on this side of the city, including Pat's Drive-In,Teresa's Mosaic Cafe, andDragon View Restaurant. Further west you'll find posh desert manors atop the slopes of the Tucson Mountains, which border the city to the west.

One of the best drives in Tucson is across the Tucson Mountains throughGates Pass, a narrow, twisting road offering incredible panoramic desert views. Gates Pass offers spots for hiking, picnicking, camping, and wildlife observation.The road is popular for sunset viewing and bicyclists, but be forewarned that the narrow turns and sudden drop-off also make it one of the city's most dangerous, yet thoroughly exhilarating, driving areas.

On the other side of Gates Pass are some of Tucson's most enduring attractions, including the popular and world-renownArizona-Sonora Desert Museum,Old Tucson Studios, and theInternational Wildlife Museum.

## North Central and the Foothills

North of downtown Tucson you'll bump into the large University district, comprised of several historic neighborhoods, the Fourth Avenue shopping district, and theUniversity of Arizona campus. Fourth Avenue, with its assortment of cafes, coffeehouses, vintage clothing shops, and bars, is a magnet for the city's youth, especially college students pulling all-nighters, the type of which have nothing to do with books and studying.

The city is bounded to the north by theSanta Catalina Mountains, the most prominent range in the city, visible throughout much of central Tucson. As the northern part of Tucson rises up towards the Santa Catalinas, the views grow more spectacular and the home prices get steeper. The posh Foothills District is known for large, custom homes surrounded by lush desert landscaping, premium resorts such asLoews Ventana Canyon, theWestward Look, and theWestin La Paloma, and exclusive shopping districts such as La Encantada andFoothills Mall.

## Northwest

## Tucson Snapshot continued

The Northwest area of Tucson is comprised of sprawling new communities set against the lush Sonoran desert landscape. For twenty-five years, Tohono Chul Park, just west of Oracle Road, has preserved the natural beauty and culture of the desert. The botanical garden features several demonstration, low-water use gardens, and a popular tearoom.

Further northwest is the town of Oro Valley, a prominent Tucson suburb. Past I-10, development gives way to the preserved desert of Saguaro National Park West situated in the Avra Valley.

### Northeast

North and east of Tucson, the city is bounded by the Catalina Mountains and Rincon Mountains, respectively. East Tucson encompasses a great deal of the suburban sprawl the city experienced starting in the 1970s. Further east, houses once more give way to the eastern segment of Tucson's national park, Saguaro National Park East. Northwest of central Tucson is another of the city's most popular natural attractions, Sabino Canyon, a haven for day hikers and popular spot for visitors.

©

### History

In 1698, Jesuit Father Eusebio Francisco Kino, on his way north from what is now Mexico to explore possible sites for building new missions, came across an Indian village called Shuk Shon. During the 70 years of Spanish colonial acquisition that followed his visit into the territory later known as Arizona, the place was renamed San Agustin del Tucson, with the hard "c" in the middle still pronounced. Both the saint's name and the hard "c" were later dropped by Anglo-Americans, with St. Augustine Cathedral downtown now the only surviving memory of the Spanish name.

When Father Kino arrived, people had already lived in the region for more than 2,000 years. Anasazi, Mogollon, Hohokam and O'odham tribes came and went in successive waves of immigration over the centuries. One of the favorite settlements lay at the base of a big hill of black volcanic rock. Known as Chuk Shon (meaning, roughly, "village of the spring at the foot of the black mountain" in the O'odham

language), it is an elevation now officially called Sentinel Peak, and also nicknamed A Mountain for the large whitewashed letter (for University of Arizona) on its eastern side. In any case, it is one of the best lookout points, commanding a view of the entire Tucson basin.

A few miles further to the South, out of a nearby village named Bac, the Jesuits worked to convert the local Pima Indians to the Christian faith. Today, this is the location of Mission San Xavier del Bac, the "White Dove of the Desert," known for its beauty world-wide.

Though the colonialists from Europe were not exactly considered friends by the Indians of Bac, they seemed the lesser evil compared to the Apache raiders that moved into the Tucson valley, to the extent that the Pima and O'odham asked for Spanish military assistance against the Apaches. The Jesuits, who had to be considered inept in effectively defending the locals, were replaced with Franciscan priests who understood the strategic importance of Tucson. Finally, in 1775, an Irish mercenary in Spanish employ known as Don Hugo O'Connor arrived to establish a presidio, or military fort, here. Though nothing is now left of the structure, El Presidio Park downtown still marks the fort's original location.

While the village at the foot of Sentinel Peak vanished, a new Mexican village slowly grew up around the Spanish presidio, nicknamed the Old Pueblo, an endearing term still used for the city. After the Gadsden Purchase of 1854, following the Mexican-American War, which gave a large part of Sonoran territory to the United States, the village quickly became a new American frontier town. It even served as the capital of the Arizona Territory from 1867 to 1877. Cattle ranchers moved into the valley, and mining companies began prospecting the mountains for copper and gold. The real boom came with the arrival of the railroad in 1880, allowing goods and raw materials to be transported at drastically reduced costs.

As East Coast entrepreneurs and investors considered Mexican housing primitive, they began replacing the mud-brick adobe buildings, first with imported brick and lumber, and later with concrete and steel, thus drastically changing the look of Tucson. With Anglos pushing into formerly

Mexican-American territory, many of the old adobes fell into disrepair and were eventually bulldozed into oblivion. Today, with the adobe style being the rage, many Tucsonans wish that those "primitive" but cool and practical houses were still standing. Luckily, some of the original adobes have been preserved in the Barrio Historico district south of downtown. The uneasy relationship between pioneers, Indians and Mexicans is well documented both at the Arizona Historical Society and the Fort Lowell Museum, while people interested in the more distant past of Arizona and its original inhabitants will find a wealth of material at the Arizona State Museum. Mexican culture is celebrated during the annual Cinco de Mayo celebrations, and the local Tohono O'odham and Yaqui people keep their traditions alive in the Waa:k Powwow and Yaqui Easter Lenten Ceremony.

With the discovery of silver and copper deposits in the nearby towns of Tombstone and Bisbee, minerals became the dominant industry in southern Arizona until copper prices took a nosedive in the 1970s. Many mines were closed at the time, but the effects of decades of strip mining, both in its economically beneficial and environmentally damaging senses, can still be viewed at the Asarco Mineral Discovery Center.

When the mining business went into a slump, aerospace and aircraft industries moved in to pick up the slack, a development extensively documented at the Pima Air and Space Museum. Since the founding of the University of Arizona in 1891, Tucson has gradually shed its image as a rugged Western town filled with cowboys, miners and hard-drinking gamblers and replaced it with marks of intellectual and technological activity. Due to the presence of the university, the city is now home to several hi-tech companies. It is also one of the world centers of astronomy, as certified by the presence of nearby Kitt Peak National Observatory.

Furthermore, Tucson has become the center of a booming health industry. Every year, thousands of visitors from the northern regions, mostly senior citizens, come to stay and enjoy the mild winter sun of southern Arizona, thus securing the financial health of the numerous spas, resorts, real estate agencies and Southwestern souvenir shops in the region.

## Tucson Snapshot continued

One of the main issues currently confronting Tucson and many other cities in the west is how to deal with urban sprawl. Since the 1950s, city development has run out of control, spawning tacky strip malls along Tucson's street grid and nondescript tract homes at the outskirts, while parts of the old barrio downtown were leveled to make room for high-rises and concrete structures such as the Tucson Convention Center. In recent years, however, Tucsonans have learned to consider their architectural and ethnic heritage as more of an asset in helping to attract tourists and conventioners to the city. By the early 1990s, what remained of the barrio had been restored, and the depressed downtown was revived with some success by the Tucson Arts District. Still, the controversy over urban development continues and, for the foreseeable future, the diverging demands of job security, population growth, water conservation, environmental protection and aesthetics promise to dominate the political agenda in the Old Pueblo.

©

### Hotel Insights

Tucson offers a good variety of accommodations for any budget. Whether you're an executive in need of state-of-the-art business facilities, a vacationer seeking to be pampered in a luxury spa, or a backpacker looking for an affordable room, you'll find it here.

#### Downtown

If you're in Tucson to attend a convention, your most convenient location will be downtown. Apart from staying within walking distance of a variety of dining and entertainment venues, you'll also be near the Tucson Convention Center.

You don't need a large budget to stay in downtown Tucson, either. The historic Hotel Congress offers interesting decor at affordable prices, plus retro ambiance mixed in with some Southwestern chic. It is definitely hip here, as you will discover by observing the crowd of businessmen and bohemians mingling at the hotel cafe.

#### South Tucson

Most of the hotels clustered around Tucson International Airport on the south side of town cater to the business traveler, offering

plenty of business and conference facilities, fitness centers, full-service restaurants, swimming pools, and free airport shuttle services. Some of them, like the Clarion Hotel Tucson Airport and the tastefully landscaped Courtyard by Marriott Tucson Airport, also have computer facilities and Internet access.

#### North and the Foothills

The area north of the University of Arizona campus (east of downtown) is another good choice if you're a visiting scholar or business traveler. From there, you will have easy access to all the academic facilities, libraries and museums on campus, as well as the ethnic restaurants and shops centered around the hip Fourth Avenue business district. Located right at the busy U of A main gate, the modern Marriott University offers rooms especially designed for business folks, including a full business center and secretarial services. If you prefer a quieter setting, book a room at the historic Arizona Inn, just a few minutes from the university.

Most of Tucson's famous resort hotels are located in the foothills of the Catalina Mountains to the north. The Westin la Paloma on Sunrise Drive is a favorite among business travelers, due to its state-of-the-art business facilities and abundance of meeting rooms. A few miles to the west, the hacienda-style Westward Look Resort offers spectacular views of the Santa Catalina Mountains, which you can explore on guided horseback tours offered by the stables located next to the resort complex.

The Omni Tucson National Golf Resort and Spa on the northwest side of town is world-renowned for its 27-hole PGA championship golf course. Located off Oracle Road, the Hilton El Conquistador Resort and Country Club affords breathtaking views of the rugged western flank of the Catalinas, while pampering guests to the max.

On the northeast side, just minutes from scenic Sabino Canyon, Loews Ventana Canyon Resort has gained fame for its spectacular golf course at the mouth of a gaping canyon.

#### Northwest

If you are attracted to the charm and comfort of bed-and-breakfast accommodations in natural settings, you should focus your search on the area west

of Oracle Road, Tucson's great north-south divide, all the way up to the Tucson Mountains. The Casa Tierra Adobe Bed and Breakfast Inn is situated in the middle of an amazing saguaro cactus forest in Saguaro National Park West, a paradise for birders, hikers, and stargazers, and so secluded that the only noises you are likely to hear are those of coyotes howling at the moon and javelinas rustling in the bushes.

#### Northeast

Accommodation on the east side of town is generally more affordable than in the Catalina foothills, and still within reasonable range from the city's major shopping and entertainment venues. Several hotels are clustered around the Park Mall and Williams Centre business areas, such as the Courtyard by Marriott-Williams Centre, which attracts many business clients. Other moderately priced accommodations in the area are available at the La Quinta Inn East and the Hilton Tucson East.

©

### Restaurants Insights

With restaurants operating today that have existed since the 1920s, Tucson's cuisine can't help but be inextricably intertwined with its history and culture.

#### Downtown

El Charro, opened in 1922, is the oldest family-run Mexican restaurant in the United States, and a must when visiting the Tucson area. This local landmark, in the historic El Presidio District, is now run by Carlotta Flores, grand-niece of founder and trailblazer Monica Flin. Eclectic cafe-style cuisine can be found at Cafe a la C'Art, Cafe Poca Cosa and Caffe' Milano. Dine with a view at La Cocina Restaurant and Cantina, which serves traditional Mexican in a lively atmosphere.

#### South Tucson

The Scordato family emigrated from New Jersey in 1972 and opened their eponymous Evangelos Scordato's, and Vivace. Over the past quarter-of-a-century the family name has become synonymous with fine Italian dining in Tucson. Le Bistro, with its impressionist Paris street scene facade, brings the flavors of France to desert diners, and has been voted one of Tucson's Top Ten Restaurants by

## Tucson Snapshot continued

the Tucson Citizen for seven consecutive years.

In Green Valley, south of Tucson, Metro Restaurants operates San Ignacio Country Club and Coyote Grill, offering contemporary regional cuisine. Their newest addition, Old Pueblo Grill, is also sure to be a popular spot in the neighborhood just south of the University of Arizona.

### North and the Foothills

On Halloween of 1983, Janos Wilder and his wife, Rebecca, opened Janos in a National Historic Landmark-registered home on the grounds of the Tucson Museum of Art. Anthony's in the Catalinas, a Triple-A Four Diamond and DiRoNa award-winning bastion of Continental cuisine, delights diners with breathtaking views of the Santa Catalina Mountains.

### Northwest

Wildflower features the culinary skill of Chef Christopher Cristiano in an attractive atmosphere. Fantastic grilled meats are abundant at Metropolitan Grill and Keaton's Arizona Grill, both also multiple award-winners.

### Northeast

A restaurant known affectionately as "The Cork" (formerly the Cork & Cleaver) has been a local tradition for more than 30 years. In 1994, Chef Jonathan Landeen took the reins of what is officially called Jonathan's Tucson Cork, bringing his gold medal-winning culinary style to the area.

The Metro Restaurant Group has created, in a sense, its own global culinary tour with its eight established restaurants (and more in the works)—Firecracker Asian-American Bistro offers an explosion of tantalizing Pacific Rim tastes and aromas—look for the flames shooting from the roof (no, not from the food, from the torches!). City Grill has been feted as the Best Grill and Best Business Lunch by Tucson Lifestyle magazine.

Backstage is just plain fun—and plenty of it—with dancing, games, sports and casual, contemporary cuisine. And then there's McMahon's Prime Steakhouse, voted Tucson Lifestyle's Best Steak

Restaurant and Best New Restaurant of 1999.

©

## Nightlife Insights

Cultural life in Tucson, by and large, reflects the ethnic and social diversity of the city, ranging from the conservative retirement communities at the outskirts to the progressive artist community downtown. To find out what's happening in the arts and who's coming to town, read the entertainment pages of the Arizona Daily Star and the Tucson Citizen, especially the "Caliente" section in the Friday edition of the Star, or grab a free copy of the Tucson Weekly.

### Performing Arts

Thanks to continuous cultural sponsorship, Tucson has managed to support both an opera and a symphony orchestra for several decades now without without interruption. Both the Arizona Opera and the Tucson Symphony Orchestra usually perform at the Tucson Convention Center Music Hall, the main venue for high culture downtown.

If you are culturally more in tune with the progressive camp, check out the Borderlands Theatre or the Invisible Theatre for avant garde political productions and light comedy. For laughs, take yourself and your family to the Gaslight Theatre, Tucson's only dinner theater, where you can munch on sandwiches and ice cream cones while watching Western dramas with lots of music, slapstick and practical jokes.

### Nightlife

The variety of Tucson nightlife defies stereotypes about the kind of entertainment a Western town has to offer. In fact, most clubs offer alternative rock instead of country and western music. The blues is very much alive in Tucson, with local acts taking turns at the Boondocks Lounge, Berky's Bar, Margarita Bay and various other clubs. Check weekly listings in the papers for details. Venues for live jazz are rarer; try the Cafe Sweetwater on 4th Avenue on Friday and Saturday nights, or the Cascade Lounge at Loews Ventana Canyon Resort for light dinner jazz on Thursday to Sunday afternoons.

While the western section of downtown is dominated by the temples of high art, the eastern part belongs to the "dark" forces of alternative rock, centered around the legendary Club Congress on the ground floor of the equally famous Hotel Congress. It's featured as "The World's Darkest Nightclub," and once you've stepped inside, you will see why it deserves that title (if you can see anything at all). Right across the street from the club there is the Rialto Theatre (The), a vaudeville theater that has been restored to its glorious old past, now featuring big names in blues and rock from out of town.

For the quintessential experience in Mexican music, go to El Mariachi on Drachman Street and check out the restaurant's house band, International Mariachi America. There are, of course, various places for country and western, but for the most authentic brand, you'll have to drive to the out-of-the way Li'l Abner's Steakhouse on a Friday or Saturday night. If you enjoy country dancing, join the up to 3,000 patrons crowding into the dance floor at the New West on Ina Road, an establishment which frequently features famous country and western acts such as Asleep at the Wheel.

### Museums and Galleries

Tucson's art scene is very much alive and thriving, particularly on the gallery and studio level. There are plenty of museums and galleries displaying the entire range of artistic styles from realistic paintings of Southwestern scenes to multimedia installations. Although it is still a mainstay of traditional Western art, visitors should be aware that Tucson is slowly becoming a driving force in cutting-edge international contemporary practice, with progressives such as the Dinnerware Contemporary Art Gallery and Elizabeth Cherry Contemporary Art spearheading the movement.

The Tucson Museum of Art, the main exhibitor of contemporary art in the city for more than forty years, has recently been expanded to include both Western Art and contemporary experimental works, as well as a gallery of pre-Columbian pieces. A little further to the east, the University of Arizona Museum of Art offers a good sampling of famous 20th-century sculpture and a collection of Renaissance art. The Center for Creative Photography across the street houses one of the best collections

## Tucson Snapshot continued

of photographs in the world, including the work of renowned photographer Ansel Adams. Its archives, which are open to the public, contain the works of hundreds of other first-rate photographers.

The city's real strengths, however, reside in its science and history museums, particularly the on-campus Arizona State Museum with its splendid displays of Native Southwestern art, and the Arizona Historical Society Museum, which is devoted to the local history of Native Americans, Mexicans and pioneers.

### Sports

As a place offering consistently dry and sunny weather throughout the year, Tucson is popular with golfers around the world. Green fees vary from course to course and from season to season, with municipal courses like the Fred Enke Municipal Golf Course offering lower rates than resorts such as the Ventana Canyon Golf Courses in the foothills.

The horse racing season at the recently expanded Rillito Park Racetrack lasts from early February into March, with more races scheduled at the Pima County Fair in April, along with horse shows, gun shows, and various kinds of other diversions. And, of course, no entertainment guide to the Old Pueblo would be complete without the Tucson Rodeo, La Fiesta de los Vaqueros as it is called in Spanish, the largest winter rodeo in the United States. If you're here in late February, you just simply can't ignore it.

### Family Friendly

Tucson offers a variety of diversions for kids. Proposing to take them to the zoo is usually a sure bet, and while Reid Park Zoo offers a good variety of assorted international animals, the Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum is more unique in presenting creatures of the desert in their natural habitats, with spectacular desert views. Another sure winner is a visit to Old Tucson Studios, a Western theme park and movie location surrounded by giant sahuaro cacti, not too far from the Desert Museum west of the city. Cowboy stunts and gunfights are also available in Trail Dust Town, especially during Trail Dust Days; and you don't have to be a kid to enjoy it.

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## Things to Do Insights

Downtown is about the only district in Tucson that can be explored on foot because most attractions here are within easy walking distance. The rest of the city, from Tohono Chul Park to Sabino Canyon, sprawls across the valley covering distances too vast to overcome without wheels.

**Barrio Historico** Tour the Spanish-Mexican district, the Barrio Historico, which contains historic buildings like St. Augustine Cathedral and the Sosa-Carrillo-Fremont House, built in the late 1800s. Grab lunch at the legendary El Charro. Nearby is the Tucson Museum of Art, home to collections of Pre-Columbian, Hispanic and contemporary works.

**Old Town Artisans** Walk through the galleries and craft shops at Old Town Artisans, then observe the decorated facade and tiled Moorish dome of the Pima County Courthouse. Nearby is the site of the original Spanish fortress at El Presidio Park. Enjoy lunch at Cup Cafe or the Barrio bistro.

**Mission San Xavier del Bac** Visit the Mission San Xavier del Bac, the "White Dove of the Desert," called the finest example of Spanish mission architecture in the country. You'll also find the International Wildlife Museum and Sentinel Peak, the site of Tucson's first settlers. Have lunch at Daisy Mae's Steak House, then stop into Brumm's Nature Gallery, which features artwork made with natural elements.

**Tohono Chul Park** Take a walk in the Tohono Chul Park, where you can take a close look at the plant and bird life of the Sonoran Desert. Have a bite at the park's cafe, then take the tram down Sabino Canyon. Enjoy the scenic beauty of the Catalina Mountains or hike through Catalina State Park.

**Gates Pass** Take the scenic drive past Gates Pass into Sahuaro National Park, stopping at the world-famous Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum on the way. Once you've seen the Park, stop by and see the astronomical art at Novaspace, then dine at Linen, famed for its service-minded staff.

Consulting a professional tour company to add focus to your days in Tucson is recommended. They can get you where you need to go, both in style and comfort.

**Hiking Tours** Spanish Trail Outfitters( +1 520 631 3787/http://www.spanishtrailoutfitters.com/) Desert Paths Tours( +1 520 327 7235) Purple Mountain Pack Goats Family Adventure( +1 520 403 4056) Sky Islands Treks( +1 520 622 6966/http://www.skyislandtreks.com)

**Bus Tours** Old Pueblo Tours( +1 520 795 7448) Great Western Tours( +1 520 572 1660/http://www.greatwesternstours.com/) Arizona Coach Tours( +1 520 791 0210) Desert Paths Tours( +1 520 327 7235) Grand Canyon Tours( +1 520 749 5388)

**Jeep Tours** Sunshine Jeep Tours( +1 520 742 1943/http://www.sunshinejeeptours.com/) Trail Dust Adventures( +1 520 747 0323/http://www.traildustadventures.com/) Southwest Offroad Tours( +1 520 579 9330)

**Air Tours** Wings Over Willcox( +1 800 200 2272/http://www.wingsoverwillcox.com/)

**Train Tours** Sierra Madre Express( +1 800 666 0346/http://www.sierramadreexpress.com)  
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## Travel Tips

### Getting There

#### Air

Tucson International Airport(TUS)+1 520 573 8100/http://www.tucsonairport.org

TUS is located approximately 10 miles from downtown and services the following airlines:

AeroCalifornia(+1 800 237 6225)  
Aerolitoral(+1 800 237 6639/http://www.aerolitoral.com) Alaska Airlines(+1 800 426 0333/http://www.alaskaair.com)  
America West(+1 800 235 9292/http://www.americawest.com) American(+1 800 433 7300/http://www.aa.com)  
British Airways(+1 800 247 9297/http://www.britishairways.com)  
Continental(+1 800 525 0280/http://www.continental.com) Delta(+1 800 221 1212/http://www.delta.com) Frontier(+1 800 432 1359/http://www.frontierairlines.com)  
KLM(+1 800 225 2525/http://www.klm.com)  
Lufthansa(+1 800 241 6522/http://www.lufthansa-usa.com) Northwest(+1 800 225 2525/http://www.nwa.com) Skywest(+1 800 221 1212/http://www.skywest.com)  
Southwest(+1 800 435 9792/http://

## Tucson Snapshot continued

www.southwest.com) United(+1 800 241 6522/http://www.ual.com)

### From the Airport

Shuttles: Arizona Stagecoach(+1 520 889 1000/http://www.azstagecoach.com) provides van service to anywhere in the Tucson area. Sun Tran(+1 520 792 9222/http://www.suntran.com) offers public bus service to and from the airport every hour.

Taxi: AAA Airport Taxi(+1 520 207 4790) Allstate Cab Company(+1 520 798 1111) Discount Cab(+1 520 388 9000) Sierra Transport(+1 520 459 2367) Yellow Cab(+1 520 624 6611)

Car Rental: Alamo(+1 800 327 9633/http://www.goalamo.com) Avis(+1 800 331 1212/http://www.avis.com) Budget(+1 800 527 0700/http://www.budget.com) Dollar(+1 800 800 4000/http://www.dollar.com) Enterprise(+1 800 736 8222/http://www.enterprise.com) Hertz(+1 800 654 3131/http://www.hertz.com) National(+1 800 227 7368/http://www.nationalcar.com)

### Train

Amtrak(+1 800 872 7245/http://www.amtrak.com), located at 400 N Toole Avenue, provides service to Tucson via the Sunset Limited route that goes from Los Angeles to Orlando.

### Bus

Greyhound(+1 800 231 2222/http://www.greyhound.com) accesses Tucson from major cities around the country. The downtown bus station(+1 520 792 3475), located at 2 S 4th Avenue, is open daily 8:30a-3a.

### Car

Approach Tucson from the northwest and southeast by Interstate 10 and take Interstate 19 from the south.

## Getting Around

### Public Transit

Named "Arizona's Best Transit" by the Arizona Transit Association, Sun Tran(+1 520 792 9222/http://www.suntran.com) is Tucson's public transit system, which offers bus routes to several destinations in the Tucson area.

The Old Pueblo Trolley(+1 520 792 1802/http://www.oldpueblotrolley.org) has historic electric streetcars operating between the 4th Avenue business district and the campus of the University of Arizona.

### Taxi and Limo

Affordable Limo(+1 520 750 8545) Allstate Cab/Bueno Taxi/Abracadabra Limousines(+1 520 798 1111/http://allstatecab.com) Catalina Transportation Services(+1 800 710 8994/http://www.catalinatransportation.com) Foothills Luxury Sedans(+1 888 563 7346) Sierra Limousine(+1 520 296 2511) Sierra Transport(+1 520 459 2367) Sir Lancelot Limos(+1 888 747 5262/http://www.sirlancelotlimos.com) Tucson Cab(+1 520 256 2561)

### Traffic Information

To find out city traffic information go to <http://www.traffic.com>

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

### Tucson

State: Arizona

Country: United States

### Tucson by the Numbers:

Population: 486,699

Elevation: 2389 feet

Average Annual Rainfall: 11.14 inches

Average January Temperature: 64 degrees F(High), 38 degrees F(Low)

Average July Temperature: 99 degrees F(High), 74 degrees F(Low)

### Quick Facts:

Major Industries: tourism/hospitality/recreation, aerospace and missile production, high technology, optics, software, electronics

Ethnic Mix: 73% Caucasian, 35.7% Hispanic, 4.5% African American, 2.6% Asian, 2.4% Native American

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

Time Zone: GMT-7

Country Dialing Code: 1

Area Code: 520(1 and the area code must be dialed even for local calls)

### Did You Know?

Tucson is the oldest continuously inhabited settlement in the United States. Natives began farming here nearly 3000 years ago.

### Orientation:

Tucson is the second-largest Arizona city and is located in the southeastern part of the state. Phoenix lies 115 miles northwest, El Paso is 262 miles east, San Diego 362 miles northwest, and Santa Fe 371 miles northeast.

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