

ARIZONA

GRAND CANYON STATE

Phoenix and Central Arizona

The Valley of the Sun - Phoenix, Scottsdale, Mesa, Tempe, and Chandler



Phoenix is the sixth largest metropolitan area in the United States, encompassing over twenty communities. This itinerary will take you through the largest cultural and entertainment meccas of the Greater Phoenix area, most commonly referred to as the “The Valley of the Sun”. You will experience history, art, architecture and great food, all while taking in the beautiful Southwest landscape and relaxed lifestyle.

Because all of these communities are part of one major metropolitan area, you may base your travel in any of these cities. Your travel time will not exceed more than 30-45 minutes, in many cases much less. The times indicated below are based on drive time from the Central Phoenix area.

Day 1 – Downtown Phoenix

Morning Start your tour in [Downtown Phoenix](#). Soak up Phoenix’s history and attractions by taking a city tour. After the tour head over to the Bentley Projects, once a linen laundry warehouse dating back to 1918, this transformed warehouse now displays world class contemporary paintings, photography, sculpture, and prints.

Afternoon In the afternoon, take a tour of the [Heard Museum](#), known for having one of the finest American Indian art collections in the nation.

Evening Have dinner at [Pizzeria Bianco](#), a “Must Enjoy Before you Die” foodie destination. Open from September thru July, this culinary delight is unique to Phoenix and a part of the slow food movement. So sit back and wait for your wood-fired pizza and taste what the New York Times said “might be the best pizza in America.”

Overnight at the [Sheraton Grand](#) in Downtown Phoenix.

Day 2 – Downtown Phoenix – Scottsdale

Morning

Enjoy breakfast at [Matt's Big Breakfast](#). This quintessential breakfast joint uses local and organic food to create delicious entrees that attract foodies from all across the valley.

Depart Phoenix for [Scottsdale](#). The drive is 12.1 miles or 19.4 kilometers.

Spend the day in Scottsdale. Scottsdale is home to [Taliesin West](#), once Frank Lloyd Wright's winter home. Take the guided tour of this renowned architect's desert masterpiece, now the main campus for the School of Architecture. Next, venture to Scottsdale's the Mix shops at South Bridge, an area for shopping and dining, featuring independent retailers and restaurants that offer eclectic wares and fares.

Take a tour of [Cosanti](#). Cosanti is the gallery, studio and residence of Italian-American architect Paola Soleri, featuring terraced landscaping with experimental earth-formed concrete structures. Soleri is best known for Arcosanti, the prototype "arcology" community founded in the high desert in 1970, approximately 70 miles north of Phoenix. Cosanti is where Soleri and his late wife Colly Soleri had established their residence in metropolitan Phoenix several years before, in 1956, on a site just a few miles away from Taliesin West (where Soleri studied), and which has since been surrounded by suburban multimillion dollar luxury houses, Cosanti has been designated as an Arizona historic site.

Afternoon

Enjoy lunch at the [Herb Box](#), a restaurant known for its innovative world creations; just try the sweet potato tacos.

Embark on a half-day rafting adventure on the Lower Salt River with [Arizona Outback Adventure \(AOA\)](#). Enjoy a guided rafting trip with Arizona Outback Adventures. Take a swim and relax in this scenic, desert oasis outside of Phoenix. A little paddling is required for this tour, but your rafting guide will steer the boat and provide information about the surrounding Sonoran Desert.

Evening

In the evening, dine at [Barrio Queen](#), one of Esquire's Magazine Best New Restaurants in America 2012. Chef Silvana Salcido Esparza takes traditional Mexican favorites and gives them attitude.

Check in for an overnight stay at the [Hyatt Regency Scottsdale Resort & Spa at Gainey Ranch](#). The beauty of the majestic McDowell Mountains, palm trees, cacti, wildflowers, Frank Lloyd Wright inspired architecture, and the spirit of native peoples combine to create the comfortable Southwestern elegance of the Hyatt Regency Scottsdale Resort & Spa at Gainey Ranch. Enjoy the many recreational amenities that this desert oasis has to offer including a 2.5 acre "water playground," 30-foot, three story waterslide, sand beach, 27 holes of championship golf at the award-winning Gainey Ranch Golf Club, four tennis courts, miles of jogging and bicycle trails, Spa Avania, the Native American

Learning Center, Camp Hyatt Kachina for children, five distinctly different restaurants and live entertainment nightly in Center Stage Bar.

Day 3 – Scottsdale – Gilbert

Morning **Enjoy complimentary breakfast in Regency Club.** Overlooking the serene beauty of Regency Court with its private indoor-outdoor terrace, gazebo and lush gardens, this private concierge lounge offers enhanced amenities. A daily European-style breakfast, afternoon snacks and evening hors d'oeuvres are served.

Depart Scottsdale for [Gilbert](#). The drive is 20 miles or 32 kilometers.

Visit the [Art Intersection](#). Galleries, exhibitions and events provide a hands-on art experience. Stop by to learn what goes into these hand-crafted creations.

Enjoy a morning yoga class with goats from [AZ Goat Yoga](#). A shared passion of goats and yoga led April Gould and Sarah Williams to create the phenomana of, 'goat yoga.' Their motto is "Make People Happy (one goat at a time)..."

Afternoon **Enjoy a hosted lunch at [Joe's Farm Grill](#).** It's a farm-to-table experience on the farm. Joe's Farm Grill is located at Agritopia in what was once the Johnston family residence. It has a mid-century modern feel with a large patio for picnic-style dining.

Visit [The Farm at Agritopia](#) & [Barnone](#). The Farm at Agritopia and Barnone is a 15-acre, USDA-Certified Organic, urban farm. It hosts more than 100 crops, as well as honey bees. While here, visitors can walk the pathways to see the farm in production. The farm also offers u-pick throughout the growing season and a farmer's market open every day. Alongside the farm, Barnone houses an artisan marketplace of skilled craftsmen ranging from woodworkers to experimental wine makers.

Evening **Enjoy dinner and drinks at the [Arizona Wilderness Brewery](#).** The brewers have a passion for Arizona's agricultural community and have woven Arizona wild-grown and farm-grown products into their craft beer.

Check in at the Hampton Inn & Suites Phoenix East Mesa for an overnight stay. Located just 15 minutes from downtown Gilbert, the hotel features 101 rooms and studio suites with free WiFi, a 40-inch HDTV, mini refrigerator, coffee maker and free hot breakfasts include freshly-baked waffles, oatmeal, scrambled eggs, cereal and fruit. The hotel also features a heated outdoor pool and whirlpool, 24-hour fitness and business centers and a treat shop which is open 24 hours for snacks.

Day 4 – Gilbert – Tempe

Morning **Depart Scottsdale for [Tempe](#).** The drive is 6.1 miles or 9.8 kilometers.

Enjoy breakfast at [Tempe Mission Palms](#). The Tempe Mission Palms is the only full-service hotel in Downtown Tempe. It is conveniently located near two Valley Metro Rail stops, connecting guests to downtown Phoenix, the airport and the ASU Tempe Campus. Part of the Destination Hotels collection, the upscale Tempe Mission Palms features a lush courtyard, a rooftop pool, whirlpool spas, 24-hour room service, and a fully-equipped fitness and business center. From here, guests can walk to more than 100 restaurants, shop and taverns. The on-site Mission Grille is a full-service restaurant featuring a new American menu as well as full breakfast and lunch buffets.

Take a tour of the [Arizona State University \(ASU\) Tempe Campus](#). On the university's first campus, students enjoy the classic Pac-12 college experience. As a vibrant college town and the campus home to Sun Devil athletics, Tempe is the heart of Sun Devil nation. Students with varied academic interests attend courses in state-of-the-art and solar powered buildings that are home to sustainability, engineering, business, health solutions, education, innovation and interdisciplinary arts and sciences colleges. More than 50,000 students study at this historic campus – ASU was founded in 1885 and opened for classes one year later – where big-time college athletics facilities, high-tech research space and performing arts venues create a dynamic and engaging learning environment.

The tour will include the following buildings:

[ASU Gammage Auditorium](#) – This structure, built by Frank Lloyd Wright, resembles a tiered birthday cake and was originally intended to be the royal opera house in Baghdad. The Arizona State University campus is the proud home of this beautiful venue, which hosts world-class concerts and Broadway musicals. While on campus, make time to visit the ASU Art Museum, considered to be one of the Southwest's most significant contemporary art institutions – and it's free.

[ASU Art Museum](#) – Cited in Art in America as “the single most impressive venue for contemporary art in Arizona,” the ASU Art Museum exhibits contemporary artists, both regional and national, with a focus on Latin American art. The museum also houses the largest collection of Cuban art in the U.S. and an award-winning print collection. Exhibitions change seasonally, and admission is always free.

[Gallery of Scientific Exploration](#) – The Interdisciplinary Science and Technology Building on the ASU Tempe Campus includes the Gallery of Scientific Exploration, outfitted with kiosk-style interactive exhibits and large-format, high-definition monitors that display video from Earth-observing satellites and robotic probes of other worlds. This first floor gallery invites visitors to explore earth and space sciences through digital media, public lectures, visible laboratories, and interactive displays. The Marston 3-D Theater is a venue for high-definition documentary movies with earth and space science themes and 3-D planetarium-style shows (although on a flat screen). The Gallery of Scientific Exploration also features the meteorite display on the second floor, drawn from the extensive collection of ASU's Center for Meteorite Studies.

Afternoon **Enjoy lunch at [Pedal Haus Brewery](#).** This 14,000 square-foot brewery is Tempe's most bike-friendly environment with a plethora of craft beer selections, sensational lunch and

dinner menus and a daily happy hour. You can park yourself in Downtown Tempe's largest patio with yard-style games such as corn hole and ping pong, two indoor-outdoor bars, each with 24 taps, a chef's table, and a cozy stylish lounge.

Check in for an overnight stay at the [Graduate Tempe](#). You'll find the Graduate Tempe located across the street from Sun Devil Central – the famed Arizona State University. Within walking distance to all of the bustling Mill Avenue sports, shops and the famous Tempe Town Lake action.

Visit [Tempe Town Lake](#). Tempe Town Lake, located adjacent to Downtown Tempe, provides a two-mile recreational haven for kayaking, sailing, rowing, jogging, skating or picnicking. The heart of Tempe Town Lake is historic Tempe Beach Park. The park provides five miles of pathways and ample room for festivals or events, such as Ironman Arizona, various charity walks, Oktoberfest and the July 4th Tempe Town Lake Festival. At Tempe Boat Rentals, everyone in the family can enjoy recreational boating at its best. They offer a variety of watercraft including kayaks, stand-up paddleboards, pedal boats and electric boats.

Evening **This evening get to [Mill Avenue](#) to dance, take in the arts, or just people watch.**

Enjoy dinner at [Culinary Dropout](#). Savory nosh, crafted cocktails and the next big names in local music have found a new home in this glamorous gastro-pub located at First Street and Farmer Avenue in Downtown Tempe

Day 5 – Tempe – Chandler

Morning **Enjoy breakfast at [The Normal Diner](#).** With old school eats and reimagined comfort food favorites, The Normal Diner is an inventive approach to the classic American diner.

Depart Tempe for [Chandler](#). The drive is 17 miles or 27.3 kilometers.

Visit the [Zelma Basha Salmeri Gallery of Western American and Native American Art](#). This popular gallery showcases Contemporary Western American Art and Contemporary American Indian Art. There are over 3,000 pieces of art displayed throughout the gallery.

Afternoon **Enjoy lunch at [El Zocalo Mexican Grille](#).** El Zocalo Mexican Grille is just one of the many award-winning, locally-based restaurants found in Chandler. Here you can enjoy a sensational meal and relax in the lush, secluded patio oasis.

Evening **In the evening, catch a drama or concert performance at the [Chandler Center for the Arts](#).** With a mission to make visual and performing arts available to the entire Chandler population, the Chandler Center for the Arts features exceptional and performances, exhibitions and events every week.

Enjoy dinner and drinks at [San Tan Brewing Company](#). Over the years, San Tan Brewing has won numerous national and local awards, and has become one of the top local food and beer destinations in the Phoenix area.

Stay overnight at the [Crowne Plaza San Marcos Golf Resort](#). An Arizona landmark since 1912 and the first golf resort in Arizona, the Crowne Plaza San Marcos is an elegant resort and a historic desert oasis. With 249 guestrooms and suites, the Crowne Plaza San Marcos is the ideal location for couple getaways, family vacations and travelers in the Phoenix area.

Day 6 – Chandler – Mesa

Morning Depart Chandler for [Mesa](#). The drive is 40 miles or 64.3 kilometers.

Enjoy breakfast at [T.C. Eggington’s Brunchery](#). T.C. Eggington’s has been serving the people of Mesa since 1985. This unique brunchery scrambles, poaches and fries over 8,000 eggs into one of their popular omelettes.

Get a taste of Arizona’s colorful mining history at the [Goldfield Ghost Town at the Superstition Mountains](#). Back in the 1980’s, Goldfield boasted 3 saloons, a boarding house, general store, blacksmith shop, brewery, meat market and a school house. After more than 115 years, travelers from all over the world still visit this gold mining town located on the historic Apache Trail.

Afternoon Have lunch at the [Mammoth Saloon](#), pan for gold, take a narrow gauge train ride and witness an old west gun fight. Enjoy a walk down Main Street in downtown Mesa where you can go antiques, eat dinner at a sidewalk café or enjoy shopping at local boutiques.

Hike the Apache Trail. The Apache Trail is one of the most popular day trips in the Phoenix-Metro area. The trail is a scenic route that winds between Apache Junction and Theodore Roosevelt Lake, and through the Superstition Mountains area. With gorgeous, desert views unlike any other, the Apache Trail is the perfect outdoor excursion.

Visit the [Arizona Museum of Natural History](#). Here you will learn of the Indian culture and natural history of the valley from the old west to the space age and from the dinosaurs to the conquistador.

Evening Check in at the [Marriott Phoenix Mesa Hotel](#) for an overnight stay. Phoenix Marriott Mesa AZ is a 12-story high-rise hotel located in the heart of the Phoenix East Valley, only 12 miles from Phoenix Sky Harbor International Airport. This hotel features a 24-hour fitness center, heated pool & spa, complimentary parking, restaurant & bar, room service, convenient free wireless high-speed internet in public space, guest laundry, meeting/banquet facilities and a 15,000 square-foot exhibit hall.

Enjoy dinner at [Hacienda de Rosa-Mesa](#). This unique, Mexican restaurant mixes authentic food with a fun environment. Some of their menu favorites include fish and shrimp tacos.

Day 7 – Mesa – Phoenix

Morning **Depart Mesa for Phoenix. The drive is 40 miles or 64.3 kilometers.**

Depart Phoenix or linger longer.