



Arizona Flavors: *Exploring the Agricultural Bounty of Arizona*

Far from an arid basin, Arizona has a diverse and thriving agricultural scene and an up-and-coming wine industry. Highlights include several gastronomic immersion opportunities: a farm-to-table you-pick experience in Yuma; learning of the Sonora desert's food sources at the Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum; lunch at a new winery in Florence; and visits to the Valley's olive mill in Queen Creek and Agritopia in Gilbert.

(Best time for visitors - winter)

Day 1 – Phoenix – Yuma

Drive from Phoenix to Yuma, drive time is approx. 3 hours.

Suggested lunch: [Lutes Casino](#). Lutes Casino is a Yuma original – and a favorite with locals and visitors alike since the 1920s. Though called a “casino,” there isn’t (officially) any gambling these days, though a friendly bet or two might get placed over the pool tables. Basically a beer and burger joint, Lutes is known for its “eclectic” décor, which evolved organically long before chain restaurants started hanging old signs and memorabilia on the walls. The Lutes family still owns and operates the Casino, which family patriarch and Justice of the Peace R.H. Lutes acquired when a gambler he’d loaned money to couldn’t pay back his debt. Don’t miss the “Especial” – a hamburger with a hot dog on top – with extra crispy fries, or the local favorite, potato tacos, with plenty of homemade salsa.

221 S. Main Street

Tour [Yuma Territorial Prison State Historic Park](#). The Yuma Territorial Prison only operated for 33 years - but that was long enough to etch a fearsome reputation into the history of the Old West, a legacy that lives on in movies like "3:10 to Yuma." Authorized in 1875 with a construction budget of \$25,000, the prison opened in July of 1876 when the first seven prisoners were locked into cells they'd hacked out of the granite of Prison Hill with their own hands. Over the next three decades, a total of 3,069 prisoners, including 29 women (including [Canadian Pearl Hart](#), from Lindsay, Ontario), lived within the prison's walls. About half of the original prison was destroyed when the railroad rerouted its main line in the 1920s. Hobos and homeless families took shelter in the remaining buildings during the Great Depression. The rest of the prison would have fallen victim to fires, weather and time if Clarissa Winsor and other local volunteers had not fought to preserve it as a city museum that later became one of Arizona's first state parks. When the prison was again threatened in 2010 – this time by state budget woes - local volunteers raised funds to keep the prison open, and the Yuma Crossing National

Heritage Area took over operations. New this year, hear echoes of hard time in a hard place as you walk through the cellblock: motion sensors trigger audio inspired by prisoner diaries, bringing to life the reality of what some called the “hellhole.”

1 Prison Hill Road

Canoe/kayak paddle on Colorado River with the [City Parks and Recreation](#) or [Yuma River Tubing](#). Since 2002, hundreds of acres along the river in Yuma have been transformed from a trash-strewn jungle of non-native vegetation into riparian habitat for all kinds of birds and animals. This is no small project: since the restoration began, workers have planted more than 150,000 trees, plant and shrubs and moved more than 330,000 cubic yards of dirt. As the tangle of invasive vegetation has been replaced with native plants and trees and water quality has improved, wildlife has voted with its wings, with the bird population doubling and species diversity increasing by 75 percent. As the habitat continues to improve, the renewed wetland is expected to provide a desert oasis for more than 330 species of birds and wildlife. City Parks and Rec offers scheduled and group canoe trips on the river through the East Wetlands and the historic crossing year round; during hot weather, you can arrange a lazy float with Yuma River Tubing.

Suggested dinner: [La Fonda Restaurant and Tortilla Factory](#). This family-owned favorite has been proudly serving authentic Mexican food for more than 40 years, and is famous for specialties like tortilla soup and *pollo* and *carne asada*. Everything is made fresh with the finest ingredients, from tortillas to sauces featuring stone-ground chiles. La Fonda is unusual in that it makes its own corn tortillas on site, from scratch – an exacting process detailed in this recent feature in the Yuma Sun:

http://www.yumasun.com/business/business_in_yuma/tortilla-factory-keeping-a-disappearing-art-alive/article_d4d8976a-54d0-11e3-8fe5-0019bb30f31a.html

1095 S 3rd Ave, Yuma, AZ 85364

Stay at any one of numerous accommodations in Yuma or the [Hilton Garden Inn Yuma Pivot Point](#). Yuma’s conference center and hotel, flanked by a public plaza showcases the historic role of the Yuma Crossing. The centerpiece of the Pivot Point Interpretative Plaza is a 1907 Baldwin steam locomotive that was moved to the historic track alignment. The plaza also preserves one of the few remaining artifacts of the original rail line, the concrete pivot on which the swing-span rail bridge opened to allow steamboats to pass. The four-story Hilton Garden Inn Yuma features guestrooms and suites offering the Garden Sleep System® bed; ergonomic Mirra® chair by Herman Miller; complimentary wired and Wi-Fi high speed Internet access; and high definition 37” flat screen televisions.

310 N. Madison Ave. Yuma, AZ 85364

Optional nightcap stop downtown: [The Pint House](#), with 40+ craft beers on tap.

Day 2 – Yuma - Tucson

Suggested breakfast: [The Hills Restaurant Patio & Bar](#). The patio overlooking the award-winning municipal golf course has a terrific alfresco ambiance with vistas of never-ending green. Chef Alex Trujillo – who also operates a weekly farmers market at the Yuma Quartermaster Depot and does catering and cooking classes in his “spare time” – promises a produce-centered breakfast to set the stage for agricultural adventures to come. BTW, Chef Alex is a Yuma native who trained at Le Cordon Bleu in Scottsdale and worked at Four Seasons properties in Scottsdale, San Francisco and Las Vegas before bringing his knives back home.

1245 Desert Hills Drive

Be outstanding in OUR field! Take a half day Yuma [Field to Feast](#) tour. (Available by reservation January – March) These half-day tours give folks a chance to get down – and a little dirty – with a hands-on farming lesson, and a visit to a field planted at the University of Arizona research farm. First get a quick food safety lesson, along with hairnets, rubber gloves, lettuce knives and a recipe card telling you what’s needed in the kitchen. While you enjoy the rest of your tour through growing areas, culinary students from **Arizona Western College** will turn fresh veggies from the field into a delicious and healthy lunch. The exact itinerary will depend on what’s up in the fields – our grower guides make sure participants always see agriculture in action. Finally, stuffed with knowledge, you’ll tuck into the promised “feast” – and get a chance to meet culinary and agriculture students.

Visit [Martha’s Gardens Date Farm](#). (Tours available from November – March) The date is one of the oldest cultured tree crops in the world, dating back more than 5,000 years. Medjool dates, which originated in Morocco, are naturally sweet, fat- and cholesterol-free and high in fiber and anti-oxidants. Medjools were introduced here in 1944, and this area is now the world's largest producer, thanks to a favourable microclimate along the Colorado River. This family date farm sells dates and other natural and organic products, and serves deli sandwiches, date shakes, ice cream and more late October through early May.

9747 S Avenue 9 3/4 E, Yuma, AZ 85365

Depart for Tucson with a date shake “for the road” as a sweet farewell!

Drive from Yuma to Tucson, drive time is approx. 3.5 hours

Check into any one of Tucson’s numerous resorts or the [Casino Del Sol Resort](#).

Arizona’s one and only *Forbes* Travel Guide Four-Star and AAA Four Diamond casino resort, Tucson’s Casino Del Sol Resort, is an entertainment oasis in the Sonoran Desert. An enterprise of the Pascua Yaqui Tribe, Casino Del Sol Resort offers guests an array of activities to enjoy, day or night. Casino Del Sol Resort features a 10-story resort tower; 215 plush guestrooms; including 10 suites; more than 22,000 square feet of gaming, including more than 1,300 slot machines and 22 table games; approximately 20,000 square feet of indoor meeting space; seven restaurants and five bars and lounges, including PY Steakhouse, winner of the *Forbes* Travel Guide Four-Star award; award-winning Hiapsi Spa & Fitness Center; AVA Amphitheater, seating approximately 5,000; 18-hole championship Sewailo Golf Club designed by Notah Begay III and Ty Butler; Oasis Pool with five VIP cabanas and Oasis Poolside Bar; two on-site Starbucks®

locations. The Pascua Yaqui Tribe is a federally recognized tribe with more than 17,000 enrolled members, and owns and operates two casinos: Casino of the Sun and Casino Del Sol. The reservation is located in southwest metropolitan Tucson.

Suggested dinner: [PY Steakhouse](#). Winner of the *Wine Spectator* Award of Excellence in 2012 and 2013 and a *Forbes* Travel Guide Four-star rated restaurant, PY Steakhouse is Casino Del Sol Resort's contemporary, fine-dining restaurant. PY incorporates local ingredients and serves only the finest hand-cut premium meats and fresh seafood, which is well paired with its in-house made liquors, signature cocktails and expansive wine list. The décor is sophisticated, yet cozy, with large chandeliers draped from the ceiling, high-backed wing chairs at the tables and dark mahogany woods throughout, providing a dramatic atmosphere for the exceptional dining experience that awaits.

5655 W Valencia Rd, Tucson, AZ 85757

Day 3 – Tucson – Florence – Mesa

Visit [Arizona Sonora Desert Museum](#). This extensive outdoor nature park, exists to educate the public about the unique Sonoran Desert. More than 200 species of live animals and more than 1,200 species of plants indigenous to the Sonoran Desert are exhibited in natural habitats. Find yourself eye-to-eye with mountain lions, prairie dogs, Gila monsters and more. There are almost two miles of paths traversing 21 acres of beautiful desert. Special presentations using the plants of the desert are given throughout the year.

2021 North Kinney Road, Tucson, AZ 85743

Suggested lunch: [El Guero Canelo](#). El Guero Canelo Mexican Restaurant started as a six by eight foot taco stand in 1993 and quickly blossomed into a Tucson staple of authentic Mexican cuisine. Most known for the Sonoran-style Hotdog, the popularity of the restaurant secured its feature on famous television shows such as *Man vs. Food* and *Food Wars*. Since it first originated, El Guero Canelo has been the go-to place to experience the best carne asada in Tucson.

2480 N. Oracle Road

Drive from Tucson to Florence, approx. drive time is 1.5 hours.

Stop for wine tasting and a walking farm tour at [The Windmill Winery](#). The Windmill Winery offers one of the most unique special event settings in the Phoenix/Mesa metropolitan area. Located in historic Florence, Arizona, you'll find the authenticity of a rural farm with the elegance of stone pathways, lush landscaping, surrounding mountain views and the newest addition – The Wine Bar & Tasting Room, open to the public Thursday through Saturday year-round. In addition, they host the monthly Cookin' & Corks themed dinners in the larger-than-life barn.

1140 W. Butte Ave., Florence, AZ 85132

Depart Florence for Queen Creek Olive Mill, approx. drive time is 35 minutes.

Visit [Queen Creek Olive Mill](#) for an Olive Oil 101 Tour & Flavors of Italy tasting. Just east of Mesa is the Queen Creek Olive Mill - Arizona's only family-owned and operated working olive mill and farm, where olives are grown and pressed for the production of high quality extra virgin olive oil. Grown at the base of the San Tan Mountains, an area known for its fertile soil, this flood plain region is famous for its high quality fruits and vegetables. The combination of long sunny days and cool desert nights provide the ideal growing conditions for the olive trees. After a tour and tasting of oils, dine at del Piero – the mill's Tuscan-inspired eatery featuring fresh gourmet sandwiches, panini's as well as soups, salads, gelato and espresso. When the weather is ideal, guests can dine in the olive grove.

25062 S. Meridian Rd., Queen Creek, AZ 85142

Overnight in any one of Mesa's hotels or resorts, or the [Courtyard Phoenix Mesa](#). The hotel is conveniently located near the Mesa Convention Center, Arizona Museum of Natural History, Chicago Cubs Spring Training site, Fiesta Mall and Mesa Arts Center. Phoenix Sky Harbor International Airport is just 12 miles away. World-class golf and shopping are within a 15-minute drive, and the location is convenient to Tempe and Scottsdale. Guests will appreciate flexible lobby spaces, free Wi-Fi throughout and easy access to the latest news, weather and airport conditions via our GoBoard. The highlight of our lobby experience is The Bistro - Eat. Drink. Connect. which provides guests with healthy food and drink offerings in the morning and evening dinner service with cocktails. While staying at our Mesa hotel, you can savor your favorite cocktail at our new outdoor experience, enjoy the refreshing outdoor pool, whirlpool, work out at our 24-hour fitness center or visit The Market, open 24/7.

1221 S. Westwood Ave. Mesa, AZ 85210

Day 4 – Mesa

Suggested breakfast: [T.C. Eggington's Brunchery](#). T.C. Eggington's Brunchery has been serving up an "eggstra" special breakfast, lunch and brunch in Mesa, Arizona since 1985, featuring award-winning traditional family recipes all made from scratch using only the freshest ingredients. Every week over 8000 eggs are scrambled, fried, poached or gently folded into a time tested collection of mouth-watering omelettes. Indulge in our famous "English Toast" of fresh-baked cinnamon bread dipped in our custard-rich batter, crab stuffed pastries, apple streusel walnut muffins or smoothie shoogles.

1660 S. Alma School Road, Mesa 85210

Tour Mesa's original citrus grower at [The Orange Patch](#). The Orange Patch is one of Mesa's original citrus growers and has stood the test of time as other orchards across the Metropolitan Phoenix area have closed and been forgotten. Located north of the city, the Orange Patch is 110 acres of citrus and 30 acres of sweet corn and passersby can enjoy the fragrant orange blossoms each spring when temperatures begin to rise. Peak season for orange production is January and February. Guests visiting are welcome to watch the picking and production process with special tours offered for groups. Blossoms are blooming every March and April and you can see folks drive by with windows down to take in the pleasant fumes. Visitors to Cubs spring training games each March love to stop by the produce stand to purchase fresh oranges, lemons, limes and grapefruit. The store also has fresh squeezed orange juice, fresh honey, homegrown snacks and other gift items for sale.

2717 East Lehi Road, Mesa, AZ 85213

Tour [The Farm at Agritopia](#). Agritopia is a community on the edge of the rural/urban interface. It is an "urban farm" designed to flourish in the urban setting. Instead of a huge field of one crop, you find a patchwork of numerous specialty crops. Agritopia has pathways which allow residents and visitors to easily view the crops. The same-day harvest is sold at The Farm Stand, as well as the being served at Joe's Farm Grill and The Coffee Shop. All of the produce grown on the farm is grown under the USDA organic protocol. Residents and non-residents of Agritopia are engaged in community gardening and there is a waiting list for 12x12 lots.

3000 E. Ray Road, Gilbert, AZ 85296

Suggested lunch: [Joe's Farm Grill](#), followed by Cupcakes at [The Coffee Shop](#). It may not look like a home any longer, but Joe's Farm Grill is created from the Johnston Family home built in 1966. The Johnston's own three restaurants in Gilbert – Joe's Real BBQ, Joe's Farm Grill and the newest Liberty Market. At Joe's Farm Grill, their family homestead - a ranch-style, slump block home – has been converted into a 60's era mid-century modern design of a "burger stand". The 100-year old trees have remained and features like a butterfly roof and open breezeway make for an airy patio with shade – a hot commodity in Arizona! Featured on Diners, Drive-Ins and Dives with Guy Fieri – here they do common food done uncommonly well. The neighboring family farm, Agritopia, supplies their quality ingredients – with much of the produce harvested the same day they cook it. They make their own pickles, marinades and sell their fruit, vegetables, and herbs from The Farm at Agritopia as part of a local co-op and use other local farmers striving to do their part in keeping the menu entirely local. The Coffee Shop features all homemade recipes and fresh ingredients. Strength lies in the coffee drinks which are fresh brewed every day with dozens of combinations of espresso beverages served hot or cold. Sit on the patio and make some new friends from the neighborhood at the big farm table. Don't forget to sample the cupcakes created by Jessica Cuff and Jenna Flowers winners of Cupcake Wars on Food Network.

3000 East Ray Road, Gilbert, AZ 85296

Stop at the [Superstition Dairy Farms](#). Visitors to Mesa can roll up their sleeves and get a taste of life on the farm. At Superstition Farms in east Mesa, guests can enjoy public tours of a fourth generation dairy farm. Run by brother and sister team, Casey and Alison Stechnij, tours are aimed at demonstrating daily life on a working "agritourist" family farm. In addition to learning about modern dairy operation and how farmers work to be environmentally conscious, guests also discover the dedication taken to the care, comfort, and health of every animal. Also on site is the SuperFarm Super Food Truck, petting zoo, Milk Bar featuring a dozen flavors including Butterscotch and Peaches & Cream, and the Mooster's Moo-tique, a fully stocked boutique featuring toys, novelty items, games, candy, fresh eggs, cheeses, local jams, and desert honey. Not to be missed is the Udder Delights homemade ice cream and other dairy delights.

3440 S. Hawes Road, Mesa, AZ 85212

Suggested appetizers & dinner: [Postino East Wine Café](#) and [Joyride Taco House](#).

At Postino guests can expect thirty-six unique, approachable wines; simple, delicious food prepared with local ingredients such as bruschetta, paninis, salads and soups; and a warm, friendly culture that brings people together. Build with a thought in mind that it would be an urban space within a suburban area. The 2,500 square foot building incorporates elements from their original location along with a versatile layout that includes an indoor-outdoor bar, wrap-around patio, and a green space for events.

Foodies know that some of the best flavor combinations come from south of the border so it's only fitting that just south of Mesa's border is Joyride Taco House, the newest restaurant to pack a regional Mexican punch. With a menu inspired by daily life and cuisine in Mexico, tacos take center stage and feature slow-roasted meats tucked into house-made tortillas. Not to be missed is the grilled street corn basted with a lime aioli and crusted cotija cheese. Fresh slaws and assorted ceviches spice up the happy hour selections and make great pairings with their fresh and colorful agua frescas. Splashes of color reach from floor to ceiling, most noticeably from the custom made concrete tiles imported from Mexico that creates a prism of color under your flip-flops. Signature garage doors adorn both the front and back of the building, creating a breezeway and two distinct patios that keep the laid back vibe in-tact.

302 N. Gilbert Rd., Gilbert, AZ 85234

Stay in the Mesa/Phoenix metropolitan area for a few more days or begin planning your next visit to Arizona!

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www.youtube.com/user/ArizonaTourism

Official State Visitors Guide: <http://www.visitarizona.com/visitors-guide>

Additional inspiration: <http://www.visitarizona.com/planning/local-word>