

TAKE THE LONG WAY 'ROUND

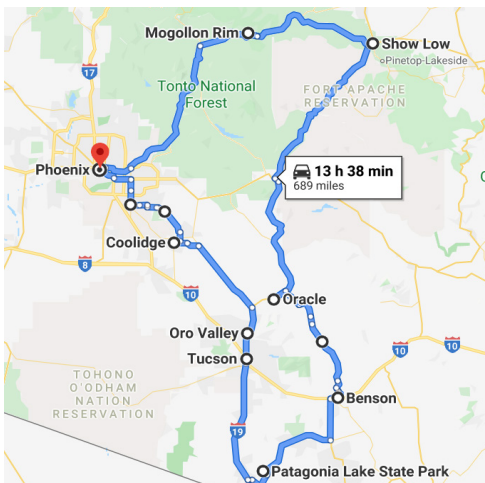
ARIZONA

VisitArizona.com

Scenic Drives in Southern and Central Arizona

Take a road trip without the crowded interstate. It may take a little longer to get to the destination, but there is a lot more beauty and joy in the journey when you travel the scenic highways and byways that wind through hills and valleys or along the banks of rivers and lakes. This itinerary will take you to National Parks, State Parks, and National Forests. Hit the road for some of the most beautiful sights you will ever behold, and remember: it is worth it to take the long way 'round.

ROADMAP



Choose your favorite set of wheels and hit the highway while we show you the path of least resistance to rediscover Arizona from vast deserts to thick pine forests. You will see all of Arizona's varying climates and landscapes.



DAY 1 PHOENIX-TUCSON

Depart the Phoenix Metropolitan Area via AZ-87 south through Chandler. The drive to [Coolidge](#) is 65 miles or 104.6 km. As you get closer to the edge of town, you will start to pass agricultural fields and finally be released from the city into the open desert. **At Hunt Highway, avoid continuing straight onto AZ-587. Instead turn left onto Hunt Hwy and immediately turn right to continue on AZ-87 South.**

Potential stop at the Casa Grande Ruins National Monument for a self-guided tour. Visit the [NPS website](#) for up to date visitation availability.
Tel: (520) 723-3172 • 1100 W. Ruins Dr, Coolidge, AZ 85128

Drive east on AZ-287 to AZ-79 south and then go right on to AZ-77 to Oro Valley. The drive is 63 miles or 101.3 km. Take a hike through [Honey Bee Canyon Park](#) to discover petroglyphs and other cultural elements of the past.
Tel: (520) 229-5050 • 13880 N. Rancho Vistoso Blvd, Oro Valley, AZ 85755

Rugged Santa Catalina Mountains view. Follow Rancho Vistoso Blvd over its hills and bridges all the way around until it turns into 1st Ave and meets up with Oracle Rd/ AZ-77. North 1st Ave offers a majestic view of the mountains.

Lunch at Rolli's Mexican Patio for a perfect pit stop with amazing rolled tacos (pictured) and flat enchiladas.
Tel: (520) 300-6289 • 4573 S. 12th Ave, Tucson, AZ 85714



Drive through the scenic [Saguaro National Park West](#) and [Tucson Mountain Park](#), stopping at the [Signal Hill Picnic Area](#) in the National Park. Just a short walk from the road, dozens of 800-year-old petroglyphs are visible.

Tel: (520) 733-5158 • [Signal Hill Rd, Tucson, AZ 85743](#)

Or Visit the [Saguaro National Park East](#) to drive the scenic [Cactus Forest Dr.](#) This winding, 8-mile loop takes a little more than 30 minutes. The single-lane, one-way road gives the impression of being isolated in a beautifully untouched desert landscape.

Tel: (520) 733-5153 • [3693 S. Old Spanish Trail, Tucson, AZ 85730](#)

Retire for the evening to [Hacienda del Sol Guest Ranch.](#)

An authentic Tucson experience at the base of the Santa Catalina Mountain Range. Dine at [Terraza Garden Patio](#) and Lounge on property.

Tel: (520) 299-1501 • [5501 N. Hacienda Del Sol Rd, Tucson, AZ 85718](#)



DAY 2 TUCSON-SONOITA-PATAGONIA

Breakfast at [Bisbee Breakfast Club.](#) A bit of Bisbee, AZ if you can't make it there this roadtrip. Whether choosing "hot from the griddle" or "south of the border" options are vast. Tel: (520) 329-8769 • [4811 E. Sunrise Dr, #165 Tucson, AZ 85718](#)

Ascend [Mt. Lemmon.](#) From the base of the mountain, the drive up takes about an hour, but make sure to leave time to take in the scenery. This beautiful drive has vista viewing points to stop and take photos.

For an enhanced experience, download an [audio tour](#) to learn more about the wonders of this region and the natural science that surrounds you. Take [Tanque Verde Road](#) east from Tucson to Catalina Highway which takes you to the top of Mt. Lemmon.

Also available [SkyNights at Mt. Lemmon Skycenter.](#) This popular after dark program uses AZ's largest public viewing telescope.

Tel: (520) 626-8122 • [9800 E. Ski Run Rd, Mt Lemmon, AZ 85619](#)



Head south and take I-10 to [Vail](#) stopping by [Charron Vineyards](#) for a tasting and picnic. Charron is one of the oldest vineyards in southern Arizona. Visitors can purchase a picnic basket filled with bread, meat, and cheese to enjoy with their wine. Tel: (520) 762-8585 • [18585 S. Sonoita Hwy, Vail, AZ 85641](#)

Or continue past Vail on AZ-83 to [Sonoita-Elgin.](#) With a dozen tasting rooms throughout the region, the vineyards and wineries of Sonoita invite you to discover a new [taste of Arizona](#). Pictured: Kief-Joshua Vineyards.

Tel: (520) 455-5582 • [370 Elgin Rd, Elgin, AZ 85611](#)

Depart south on AZ-82 to [Patagonia Lake State Park.](#) Tucked away in the rolling hills of southeastern Arizona this park is a hidden gem. Popular for fishing, camping and water sports - you can also hike, picnic and birdwatch. Spend the day and overnight in one of the 100 campsites and RV hookups available.

Tel: (520) 287-6965 • [400 Patagonia Lake Rd, Patagonia, AZ 85624](#)

For hotel accommodations [Stage Stop Inn](#) is down the road.

Tel: (520) 394-2211 • [303 W. McKeown Ave, Patagonia, AZ 85624](#)



DAY 3 PATAGONIA-BENSON-ORACLE

Depart Patagonia for Benson. Head back to Sonoita and then east to AZ-90N to Benson. The drive is 60 miles or 96.5 km.

Potential stop on the way to Benson at Kartchner Caverns State Park.

Boasting the world's longest stalactite formation Kartchner Caverns introduces visitors to the mysterious world of caves. Check the [website for tour availability](#).

Tel: (520) 586-4100 • 2980 S. Hwy 90, Benson, AZ 85602

Breakfast or lunch at Horseshoe Cafe in Benson. A staple for diner food and desserts. Tel: (520) 586-2872 • 154 E. 4th St, Benson, AZ 85602

Leave Benson for Oracle. For a back road drive, go north on Pomerene and Cascabel Rd, which eventually joins Redington Rd. The drive is 70 miles or 112.6 km, of which half is on a well-maintained, but unpaved road.

Visit Oracle State Park a 4,000 acre wildlife refuge. A section of the Arizona Trail crosses through the park and it is a designated International Dark Sky Park. As an International Dark Sky Park, this location offers exceptional conditions for viewing the wonders of the night sky including the Milky Way. If visiting after hours for stargazing park at the American Avenue Trailhead.

Tel: (520) 896-2425 • 3820 Wildlife Dr, Oracle, AZ 85623

Check in to El Rancho Robles. This historic ranch is nestled at the base of the Santa Catalinas. In the 1920s, it became one of the area's most popular dude ranches. Tel: (520) 896-7651 • 1170 N. Rancho Robles Rd, Oracle, AZ 85623

Dinner at the Oracle Inn Steakhouse & Lounge. This western-themed restaurant serves steaks and traditional American food, and it boasts a full bar. Tel: (520) 896-3333 305 E. American Ave, Oracle, AZ 85623



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Arizona State Parks

DAY 4 ORACLE-SHOW LOW

Have an early breakfast at the Oracle Patio Café and Market. This restaurant is known for their breakfasts and pies. It is open for breakfast and lunch daily except Mondays. Tel: (520) 896-7615 • 270 American Ave, Oracle, AZ 85623



Jimmy Paderna

Depart Oracle for Show Low, driving north on AZ-77. The drive is 153 miles or 246 km. You will drive through open desert, rise and fall over foothills and valleys, and spend 8 miles in a valley oasis alongside the Gila River. The AZ-77 joins the US-60 as it passes through Globe. One of the most majestic views along the road is descending into the Salt River Canyon. The Salt River Canyon Rest Stop has a foot bridge over the river as well as stairs down to the canyon's edge. It is the perfect place to stretch your legs and take in the magnificent landscape.

Stop for lunch at The House in Show Low. This award-winning burger joint prides itself on creativity. You can even get a bacon, egg, & cheese burger on two glazed donuts. Tel: (928) 537-9273 • 1191 E. Hall, Show Low, AZ 85901



Jill Richards

Visit Fool Hollow Lake Recreation Area. The park along the lake, located in the Apache-Sitgreaves National Forest, is a haven for camping among the tall pines and hikes along the lake at 6,300 ft. in elevation. Spend time fishing, picnicking, boating and viewing the wildlife. Tel: (928) 537-3860 • 1500 N. Fool Hollow Lake, Show Low, AZ 85901

Overnight at Fool Hollow Lake Recreation Area. Or check-in at the GreenTree Inn & Suites. Set along Highway 260, 15 miles or 24.1 km south, the newly renovated hotel in Pinetop, AZ is a great accommodation option.

Tel: (928) 367-6077 • 431 E. White Mountain Blvd, Pinetop, AZ 85935

DAY 5 SHOW LOW-PAYSON-PHOENIX

Depart Show Low for the [Mogollon Rim](#) on Forest Road 300/Rim Road.
The drive is 63.3 miles or 101.9 kilometers.

Turn right on Forest Road 300/Rim Road to get to the Woods Canyon Overlook and the Rim Lakes Vista Overlook on the edge of the Mogollon Rim. Both of these overlook areas have parking and views that are hard to beat. You can stand on edge of a 2,000-foot cliff with unobstructed views for miles. **Tel: (928) 333-4301 • Rim Rd, Payson, AZ 85541**

Depart the Mogollon Rim for Payson. The drive is 34.2 miles or 55 km.

Stop for dinner at Mackey's Grill. This local hang-out has wings 'to-die-for' and awesome sandwiches. Grab a seat on the patio or inside in one of their hand carved booths. Tel: (928) 474-7411 • 201 W. Main, Payson, AZ 85541

Depart Payson for your return trip to [Phoenix](#). The drive is 88.8 miles or 142.9 km.

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TRIP NOTES

AND ADDITIONAL STOPS FOR MY ARIZONA EXPEDITION

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