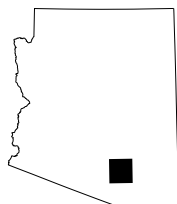


Tucson



Compared to a certain Arizona city up north (cough, cough, *Phoenix*), Tucson (pronounced too-sawn) wears her charms openly on her sleeve. Look: no water-wasting lawns in Tucson. Instead, folks craft their front yards out of desert fauna, which immediately gives this town a more organic atmosphere.

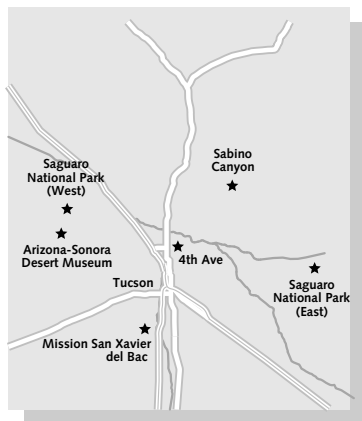
That's just one of the ways Arizona's second city is her most appealing, especially when it comes to magnetizing intelligentsia, progressives and creative types. No, it's not Manhattan in the desert, and Tucsonans are proud of that. Why try to emulate New York when they're fiercely protective of their own unique identity, a blend of Anglo, Hispanic and Native American?

Tucson is the realest city in Arizona, if by 'city' we mean a place where people from different backgrounds interact on a daily basis in a shared physical and mental space. There's an actual center here, a shared space that makes for a community that shares its ideas, rather than a commuting waypoint surrounded by cut-off suburbs. Sorry for the academic definition, but it fits and it bucks the Western urban trend, and manifests itself pretty concretely: in chola-inspired burlesque shows, punk rock that incorporates cowboy twang, university activists lunching beside cowboys, and desert artists determining urban planning.

It's in this last area – planning and preservation – that Tucson is so particularly appealing, and there are few better ways of appreciating this city than walking through its historic downtown. That said, you should head out of the city limits, too; another of Tucson's best attributes is the meltingly beautiful desert landscape it is ensconced in, and the parks that preserve that landscape.

HIGHLIGHTS

- **Best Sunset**
Driving into (or away from) the sunset in either wing of **Saguaro National Park** (p249).
- **Most Fun on the Town**
Having a pub crawl up **4th Ave** (p248).
- **Worthiest Effort**
Hiking your way out of the gorge in **Sabino Canyon** (p252).
- **Biggest Surprise**
Getting bowled over by the interior murals of **Mission San Xavier del Bac** (p250).
- **Best Wildlife-Viewing**
Spotting coyotes prowling through their environment at the **Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum** (p249).



■ Population 548,800

■ Elevation 2389ft

HISTORY

Visitors to downtown Tucson usually notice 'A Mountain' looming over the city to the southwest. Its proper name is Sentinel Peak, but its nickname comes from the giant 'A' whitewashed onto it by students from the University of Arizona (UA) in 1915 and now repainted by freshwomen and men as an annual tradition. But even 'Sentinel Peak' is a relatively new name. When the Spaniards arrived here in the 1600s, the village below A Mountain was known as 'Stjukshon,' meaning 'at the foot of the dark mountain.' The Spaniards pronounced it 'Took Son' and later the Anglos dropped the 'k' sound.

Native Americans had been settled in the Tucson area for some 12,000 years prior to European arrival. Initial settlement was by groups of agriculture-practicing tribes that were the forerunners of the Tohono O'ohdam; after AD 100, the seminomadic Apache also settled in the area.

Jesuit priest Padre Eusebio Francisco Kino arrived in the late 1600s and spent two decades establishing missions primarily among the indigenous population. One of the churches he founded, Mission San Xavier del Bac (p250), south of Tucson, is still used today. Kino was also responsible for introducing cattle into the area.

With the missions came immigrants: Spanish settlers from the Mexican colonies. They lived in an uneasy truce with the Indians until 1751, when the Pimas rebelled against the unwanted newcomers and killed or forced out many settlers and missionaries. The Spanish sent in soldiers to control the Indians and protect the settlers, building several walled forts, or presidios, one of which became the city of Tucson. For decades battles and raids would occur either on the outskirts of or within Tucson, each resulting in the deaths of a handful of Spanish and Native American warriors. After Mexico won its independence from Spain in 1821, Tucson became a Mexican town. Thus southeastern Arizona, more than other parts of the state, can trace the bulk of its cultural background to traditional Native American culture and a rich Hispanic heritage.

The Gadsden Purchase of 1853 turned southeastern Arizona, on paper at least, from Mexican into US territory. Anglos began to arrive, homesteading the grasslands in the southeastern corner and finding that it made

good ranching country. But they failed to realize the Apaches, who inhabited the desert grasslands and mountains, didn't much care about the Gadsden Purchase – it was all Apache country in the first place. Mexico had no original claim to their homeland, nor a right to sell it off. Tensions between the Native and Anglo Americans erupted into war in the 1850s. Such conflicts marked westward US expansion through most of the 19th century, but the Apaches, led by legendary warrior-chiefs like Victorio, Cochise and Geronimo, were especially fierce.

Anglos began to arrive in greater numbers after the Butterfield Stage Company started passing through Tucson in 1857. The Apache Wars prompted the construction of Fort Lowell in 1866. The town was a wild place in those days, and soldiers on drinking sprees added to the general mayhem. In 1873, in an attempt to minimize carousing by the army, Fort Lowell was moved to its present location 7 miles northeast of town. By the 1880s, Tucson had gone from frontier town to American city; the railroad arrived, Geronimo surrendered in 1886, ending the Indian Wars, and UA opened in 1891.

Tucson grew slowly until WWII brought an influx of young men to train at the Davis-Monthan Air Force Base. After WWII, many of these trainees came back to Tucson and this, along with the widespread development of air conditioning, ensured Tucson's rapid growth in the latter half of the 20th century.

ORIENTATION

Tucson lies mainly to the north and east of I-10 at its intersection with I-19, which goes to the Mexican border at Nogales. Downtown Tucson and the main historic districts are east of I-10 exit 258 at Congress St/Broadway Blvd.

Congress St/Broadway Blvd is a major west-east thoroughfare. Most west-east thoroughfares are called streets, while most north-south thoroughfares are called avenues (although there is a sprinkling of roads, boulevards etc). Stone Ave, at its intersection with Congress, forms the zero point for Tucson addresses. Streets are designated west and east and avenues north and south from this point.

INFORMATION

Bookstores

Antigone Books (Map p245; ☎ 520-792-3715; www.antigonebooks.com; 411 N 4th Ave; ☎ 10am-7pm