

Arizona

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Best Places to Stay

- » El Tovar (p169)
- » Grand Canyon Lodge (p180)
- » Motor Lodge (p134)
- » Boulders (p120)
- » View Hotel (p189)

Best Places to Eat

- » Elote Cafe (p146)
- » Poco (p227)
- » 15.Quince Grill & Cantina (p138)
- » El Tovar Dining Room (p170)
- » Cafe Poca Cosa (p212)

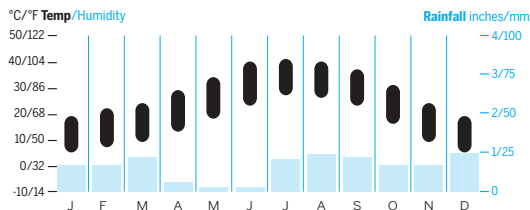
Why Go?

Arizona makes you wish your life was set to music. Cowboy songs in Monument Valley. The Eagles in Winslow. Anything produced by T Bone Burnett on a dusty mining road. And for the Grand Canyon? A fist-pumping 'We Will Rock You,' of course. Arizona, you see, is made for road trips. It has its gorgeous, iconic sites, but it's the road that breathes life into a trip. Take Route 66 into Flagstaff for a dose of mom-and-pop friendliness. Channel the state's mining past on a twisting drive through rugged Jerome. Reflect on Native American history as you drive below a mesa-top Hopi village.

Political controversies – such as immigration reform and budget slashing – have grabbed headlines recently, but these hot-button issues need perspective. Politicians are temporary. But the sunset beauty of the Grand Canyon, the saguaro-dotted deserts of Tucson and the red rocks of Sedona... they're here for the duration and hoping you'll stop by, regardless of the politics.

When to Go

Phoenix



Jan–Mar

Visit spas in southern Arizona. Cross-country ski in Kaibab National Forest.

Jun–Aug

High season for exploring the Grand Canyon, Monument Valley and Sedona.

Sep & Oct

Hike down to Phantom Ranch from the Grand Canyon's South Rim.

Arizona Planning

Although the summer months (June to early September) are a popular time to visit Grand Canyon National Park, it's the opposite in the southern part of the state where the heat can be unbearable at that time of year. Save trips to Phoenix and southern Arizona for the spring. A good rule of thumb is to gauge the climate by the altitude. The lower you are, the hotter and drier it will be.

For Grand Canyon trips, make reservations for lodging, overnight mule rides and white-water rafting a year in advance, particularly if you plan to visit in summer.

DON'T MISS

Grand Canyon Visitor Center on the South Rim has been revamped. Read the interpretive exhibits for background then stroll to Mather Point on the new, pedestrian-friendly plaza. You'll also find bike rentals and the introductory film *Grand Canyon: A Journey of Wonder*. On the Rim Trail, just west of the Yavapai Geology Museum & Observation Station, look for the new **Trail of Time** display.

In summer, save time and gas by prepurchasing your ticket and hopping on the new **Tusayan shuttle**, which runs from the National Geographic Visitor Center in Tusayan to the Grand Canyon Visitor Center in the park.

The California condor isn't new, but the gnarly bird with the 9ft wingspan remains a popular topic of conversation at the park. To learn more about this prehistoric scavenger, attend a ranger-led **Condor Talk**, held daily on both rims during the busy seasons (March to October South Rim, mid-May to mid-October North Rim).

Tips for Drivers

- » The main east–west highway across northern Arizona is the 400-mile stretch of I-40, which roughly follows the path of Historic Route 66. It's the interstate to take if you're headed for the Grand Canyon or the Navajo Reservation. I-10 enters western Arizona at Blythe and travels about 400 miles to New Mexico via Phoenix and Tucson.
- » South of Phoenix, the I-8 coming west from Yuma joins the I-10. The I-8 is the most southerly approach from California, and it's a lonely highway indeed.
- » Cell phone reception, FM radio, lodging and gas are almost nonexistent along I-8 between Yuma and Gila Bend.
- » Phoenix Sky Harbor International Airport (p127) and Las Vegas' McCarran International Airport (p87) are major gateways, but Tucson also receives its share of flights.
- » Greyhound and Amtrak do not typically stop at national parks in Arizona, nor do city buses and trains.
- » For more information on transportation throughout the Southwest, see p557.

TIME ZONE

Arizona is on Mountain Time (seven hours behind GMT) but is the only Western state not to observe daylight saving time from spring to fall. The exception is the Navajo Reservation, which – in keeping with those parts of the reservation located in Utah and New Mexico – does observe daylight saving time. The small Hopi Reservation, which it surrounds, follows Arizona.

Fast Facts

- » Population: 6.39 million
- » Area: 113,635 sq miles
- » Sales tax: 6.6%
- » Phoenix to Grand Canyon Village: 235 miles, 3½ hours
- » Phoenix to Tucson: 116 miles, 1¾ hours
- » Kingman to Holbrook: 240 miles, 3¼ hours

Resources

- » Arizona Department of Transportation: www.az511.gov
- » Arizona Heritage Traveler: www.arizonaheritage.traveler.org
- » Arizona Office of Tourism: www.arizonaguide.com