



Arizona

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Best Views

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- ➔ View Hotel (p192)
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Best Places to Stay

- ➔ El Tovar (p172)
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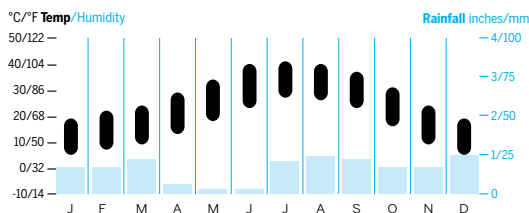
Why Go?

Arizona is made for road trips. Yes, the state has its show-stoppers – Monument Valley, the Grand Canyon, Cathedral Rock – but it's the drives between these icons and others that really breathe life and context into a trip. For a dose of mom-and-pop friendliness, follow Route 66 into Flagstaff. To understand the sheer will of Arizona's mining barons, take a twisting drive through rugged Jerome. Native American history becomes contemporary as you drive past the inhabitants of a mesa-top Hopi village dating back 1000 years.

Controversies about hot-button issues – immigration, gay rights – have grabbed headlines recently, but these legislative issues are perhaps best left to the politicians, here only temporarily. The majestic beauty of the Grand Canyon, the saguaro-dotted deserts of Tucson, the sunset glow of Camelback Mountain and the red rocks of Sedona...they're here for the duration.

When to Go

Phoenix



Jan–Mar

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

Jun–Aug

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

Sep & Oct

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

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** 6.6 million
- **Area** 113,635 sq miles
- **Sales Tax** 5.6%
- **Phoenix to Grand Canyon Village** 235 miles, 3½ hours
- **Phoenix to Tucson** 116 miles, 1¾ hours
- **Kingman to Holbrook** 240 miles, 3¾ hours

State Flower

The saguaro cactus blooms in May and June. It is illegal to harm a saguaro in Arizona.

Resources

- **Arizona Department of Transportation** www.az511.gov
- **Arizona Scenic Roads** www.arizonascenicroads.com
- **Arizona Office of Tourism** www.visitarizona.com

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 pedestrian-friendly plaza. You'll also find bike rentals here, an increasingly popular way to explore the park. Inside, the introductory film *Grand Canyon: A Journey of Wonder* plays regularly. On the back terrace of Lookout Studio in Grand Canyon Village, attend a ranger-led **Condor Talk** and look for the giant birds soaring nearby.

The expansive **Musical Instrument Museum** in Phoenix will wow your ears with music from guitars, gongs, lutes and thumb pianos – it's an amazing array of global instruments engagingly shared with visitors. If any sense of wonder still lingers in your soul – or you're traveling with kids – visit the new **Mini Time Machine Museum of Miniatures** in Tucson. From dragons to dollhouses, it's all small and it's all cool.

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 east 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 and Las Vegas' McCarran International Airport 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.