

# Southwest

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## Best Places to Eat

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## Best Places to Stay

- Ellis Store Country Inn (p903)
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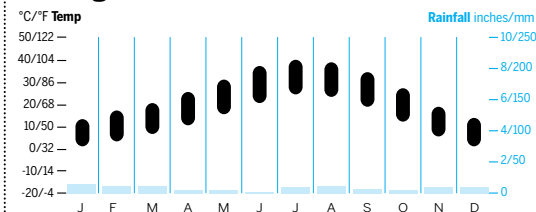
## Why Go?

The Southwest is America's untamed backyard, where life plays out before a stunning backdrop of red rocks, lofty peaks, shimmering lakes and deserts dotted with saguaro cacti. Reminders of the region's Native American heritage and hardscrabble Wild West heyday dot the landscape, from enigmatic pictographs and abandoned cliff dwellings to crumbling Hispanic missions and rusty mining towns. Today, history making continues, with astronomers and rocket builders peering into star-filled skies while artists and entrepreneurs flock to urban centers and quirky mountain towns.

The best part for travelers? A splendid network of scenic drives linking the most beautiful and iconic sites. But remember: it's not just iconic, larger-than-life landscapes that make a trip through the Southwest memorable. Study that saguaro up close; ask a Hopi artist about their craft; savor some green-chile stew. You may just cherish those moments the most.

## When to Go

### Las Vegas



**Jan** Ski near Taos and Flagstaff. In Park City, hit the slopes and the Sundance Film Festival.

**Jun–Aug** High season for exploring national parks in New Mexico, Utah and northern Arizona.

**Sep–Nov** Hike to the bottom of the Grand Canyon or gaze at bright leaves in northern New Mexico.

## History

By about AD 100, three dominant cultures had emerged in the Southwest: the Hohokam, the Mogollon and the Ancestral Puebloans (previously known as the Anasazi).

The Hohokam lived in the Arizona deserts from 300 BC to AD 1450, and created an incredible canal irrigation system, earthen pyramids and a rich heritage of pottery. A cataclysmic event in the mid-15th century caused a dramatic decrease in the Hohokam population; it's not entirely clear what became of them, but the oral traditions suggest that certain local tribes are their direct descendants.

From 200 BC to AD 1450 the Mogollon lived in the central mountains and valleys of the Southwest; they left behind what are now called the Gila Cliff Dwellings, and many beautifully decorated bowls.

The Ancestral Puebloans left the richest heritage of archaeological sites, such as those at Chaco Culture National Historic Park and Canyon de Chelly National Monument. Their descendants are now found in Pueblo groups throughout New Mexico, as well as the Hopi in Arizona, whose Old Oraibi village may be the oldest continuously inhabited settlement in North America.

In 1540 Francisco Vázquez de Coronado led a Spanish-sponsored expedition from Mexico City to the Southwest. Searching in vain for riches, his party killed or displaced

many of the Native Americans they encountered. More than 50 years later, Juan de Oñate established the first capital of New Mexico at San Gabriel; it was moved to Santa Fe around 1610. Great bloodshed resulted from the Spaniards' attempts to impose their religion and way of life, and the Pueblo Revolt of 1680 even briefly expelled them altogether.

Development in the Southwest expanded rapidly during the 19th century, mainly due to railroad and geological surveys. As the US pushed west, the army forcibly removed entire tribes of Native Americans in horrifyingly brutal Indian Wars. Gold and silver mines drew fortune seekers, and the lawless mining towns of the Wild West mushroomed practically overnight. Soon the Santa Fe Railroad was luring a flood of tourists to the West.

Modern settlement is closely linked to water use. Following the Reclamation Act of 1902, huge federally funded dams were built to control rivers and irrigate the desert. Rancorous disagreements over water rights are ongoing, especially with the phenomenal boom in residential development and the extensive recent drought. The other major issue in recent years, especially in southern Arizona, has been illegal immigration across the border from Mexico.

## SOUTHWEST IN...

### One Week

Museums and a burgeoning arts scene set an inspirational tone in **Phoenix**. In the morning, follow Camelback Rd into **Scottsdale** for top-notch shopping and gallery-hopping in Old Town. Drive north to **Sedona** for spiritual recharging before pondering the immensity of the **Grand Canyon**. From here, choose either bling or buttes. For bling, detour onto **Route 66**, cross the new bridge beside **Hoover Dam** then indulge your fantasies in **Las Vegas**. For buttes, drive east from the Grand Canyon into Navajo country, cruising beneath the giant rock formations in **Monument Valley Navajo Tribal Park** then stepping back in time at stunning **Canyon de Chelly National Monument**.

### Two Weeks

Start in glitzy **Las Vegas** before kicking back in funky **Flagstaff** and peering into the abyss at **Grand Canyon National Park**. Check out collegiate **Tucson** or frolic among cacti at **Saguaro National Park**. Watch the gunslingers in **Tombstone** before settling into Victorian **Bisbee**.

Secure your sunglasses for the blinding dunes of **White Sands National Monument** in New Mexico then sink into **Santa Fe**, a magnet for art-lovers. Explore the pueblo in **Taos** and watch the sunrise at awesome **Monument Valley Navajo Tribal Park**. Head into Utah for the red-rock national parks, **Canyonlands** and **Arches**. Do the hoodoos at **Bryce Canyon** then pay your respects at glorious **Zion**.