

Fun Three-Day-Weekend Trips in Arizona

Written by Emily Ward

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Why not spend your three-day-weekend exploring your state for some outings that are unique to Arizona. Whether you're in the mood for a relaxing resort weekend, want to be one with nature or are looking to entertain the kiddos, there are tons of opportunities just hours away from the Valley. Read on to discover our top getaways for fun three-day-weekend trips.

Resorts



Arizona Inn | Tucson

A hideaway in the heart of Tucson near art galleries, shops and restaurants, guests of the Arizona Inn can reach this stylish resort after a two-hour drive southeast of the Valley. Set on 14 acres of gardens, the Arizona Inn offers a quiet outdoor space in the middle of the city. Stroll through the fragrant flowers, lounge next to the 60-foot heated outdoor pool and have a romantic dinner at the inn's award-winning gourmet restaurant. Or play tennis, workout at the gym, read a book in the library and visit the Audubon Bar for some live piano music. The inn has 95 individually decorated guest rooms and suites with complimentary Internet access. Ask for a Deluxe Room for a sitting area as well as a private patio. Room rates start at just \$170 per night. For more information, visit arizonainn.com.



Amara Resort & Spa | Sedona

Amara Resort & Spa is located at the entrance to the picturesque Oak Creek Canyon in Sedona, about a two-hour drive north of the Valley. The resort can be found between canyons and those infamous red-rock formations. There is a range of rooms and suites to choose from, such as patio, courtyard, spa and creekside rooms as well as creekside suites. Guest activities include trout fishing, horseback riding, jeep safaris, golf, yoga classes and relaxing by the pool or in the spa. The resort's restaurant, SaltRock Southwest Kitchen, serves breakfast, lunch and dinner and offers an extensive menu of seasonal takes on traditional regional cuisine with the finest Verde Valley ingredients. Definitely don't miss the sunrises and sunsets here as they illuminate the area in fiery hues. Plus, Amara Resort & Spa is a pet-friendly Kimpton hotel, so even your favorite four-legged friend can join in on the fun. For more information, visit amararesort.com.

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Greer Lodge Resort & Cabins | Greer

Once upon a time, Greer Lodge Resort & Cabins was simply a cozy inn nestled into a mountainside meadow four hours northeast of the Valley. Established in 1948, this family-owned resort is located on historic Main Street, bordering the Greer Meadow and National Forest. Today, the resort has transformed into rustic rooms and luxury cabins that overlook a creek and a casually rustic restaurant serves American cuisine on an outdoor deck. Spend some quality time on the creek by taking advantage of the resort's complimentary fly-fishing gear and first-time lessons. Finish your peaceful day with drinks in the warm glow of the stone fireplace in the main lodge. Rooms start at \$69 per night and cabins start at \$99 per night. For more information, visit greerlodgeaz.com.

Nature



The Arboretum at Flagstaff | Flagstaff

Home to the world's largest ponderosa pine forest and just a two-and-a-half-hour drive north of the Valley, The Arboretum at Flagstaff is not to be missed. Bird watching enthusiasts to your everyday visitors love to enjoy the 2,500 different species of plants and over 100 species of birds. Plus, guests can explore several miles of trails and attend classes and workshops on both gardening and natural history. Admission costs \$7 for adults, \$3 for ages three to 17 and free for children under three. Included in the price of admission are daily-guided tours of the facility. The tours last one hour and are offered at 11 a.m. and 1 p.m. For those visiting Thursday through Sunday, definitely don't miss the "AZ Wildlife Up Close" tour. For more information, visit thearb.org.



Boyce Thompson Arboretum State Park | Superior

The oldest arboretum and botanical garden in the American Southwest, the Boyce Thompson Arboretum is a 320-acre collection of desert wildlife located at the foot of Picketpost Mountain in Superior, about a one-hour drive east of the Valley. The arboretum includes two miles of walking paths, 3,200 different desert plants, more than 230 species of bird and 72 terrestrial species. It is a great bird watching spot and the beautiful gardens provide an exciting learning environment for kids and adults alike. The Boyce Thompson Arboretum is open daily from 6 a.m. to 3 p.m. during the summer season, and regularly from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Admission costs \$7.50 for adults, \$3 for ages five to 12 and free for children under five. For more information, visit azstateparks.com/Parks/BOTH.

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Kartchner Caverns State Park | Benson

After a couple of spelunkers accidentally discovered the cave back in 1974, this natural wonder was kept a secret for more than a decade. It was feared that tourists would ruin the living caverns, so developers took great care in slowly opening Kartchner Caverns to tourism. Two-and-a-half hours southeast of the Valley, the state park now features a show cave with 2.4 miles of passages. As you enter the caverns, the warm, moist air will slap you in the face and every now and then you can even hear drops of water splashing into a pool. A paved walkway makes navigation easy, and the grand finale of the Rotunda and Throne Room Tours will stun you. Admission costs \$18.95 for adults and \$9.95 for children ages seven to 13. For more information, visit azstateparks.com/Parks/KACA.

Kids



Wigwam Motel | Holbrook

Have you slept in a wigwam lately? When passing through Holbrook, about a three-hour drive from the Valley, the Wigwam Motel is hard to miss. The teepee-style rooms have turned heads on the famed Route 66 for decades. Although the motel closed in 1974 after Interstate 40 bypassed Route 66 and many businesses fell on hard times, it reopened in 1988 and has been an attraction ever since. The Wigwam Motel is now even on the National Register of Historic Places! Vintage cars are parked outside and although they don't exactly keep with the teepee theme, it somehow all works. A museum in the lobby helps complete the experience; it's history, both classic and kitsch, all rolled into one. And as it is sure to remind them of the movie *Cars*, the kids will love it. Rooms range from \$56 to \$62. For more information, visit sleepinawigwam.com.



The Flintstones Bedrock City | Williams

The cartoon you loved to watch as a kid comes to life at this theme park and campground just 30 miles from the Grand Canyon. Now even your kids will be shouting, "Yabba-dabba doo!" as prehistoric characters roam freely and you snap their pictures together. Before you leave, the kids will love Fred and Wilma and the rest of the gang just as much as you do. Take a train ride through a smoking volcano, and then slide down the tail of a large brontosaurus just like Fred. In the gift shop, you'll find a plethora of Flintstones T-shirts, stuffed toy dinos and rock candy. Hook up a trailer or pop a tent at the campground to make it a weekend. And don't miss Fred's Diner for a Bronto Burger and slice of Gravelberry pie. Theme-park entrance is \$5. For more information, visit bedrockaz.com.

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Queen Mine Tours | Bisbee

Don some yellow slickers and lighted hard hats just like miners used to do and ride a lumbering train 1,500 feet into the side of a mountain. Just over three hours southeast of the Valley, the Queen Mine Tours in Bisbee are led by retired Phelps Dodge employees who once worked the mines. Kids will be entranced as they hear firsthand stories about the dangers and drama of working underground and how it was all done. In the darkness, your headlight will pick out remaining veins of copper, gold, turquoise, silver, lead and zinc. Remember to dress warm though, as it is always a cool 47 degrees underground. Tours last about 75 minutes and depart five times a day, seven days a week. Admission costs \$13 for adults and \$5.50 for kids four to 12, while children three and under are free. For more information, visit queenminetour.com.