

Consider an Autumn Leaf Peeping Trip

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by Kelly Potts

From pumpkin spice lattes to football season, it's official: Autumn is upon us. Each fall, trees across the United States, including Arizona, put on a brilliant show of color ranging from dazzling reds to brilliant oranges and vibrant yellows. This fall, why not embrace all that autumn has to offer by taking a scenic drive? AAA Travel experts recommend the following three routes that offer some of the most beautiful fall scenery Arizona has to offer this time of year:

Around the Peaks Loop

This scenic drive is located in the Coconino National Forest in the San Francisco Peaks. It winds through pine forests, aspen groves and around Arizona's highest mountain, Humphreys Peak. There are numerous spots to stop along the way for a hike, picnic, sightsee and set up camp. It takes about two hours to complete the loop, not including the drive time from Phoenix.

Kaibab Plateau-North Rim Parkway

This scenic byway winds offers stunning views of fall foliage, including ponderosa pine and quaking aspen. In fact, this drive has been described as "the most pleasant 44 miles in America," according to the U.S. Forest Service. It takes about three hours to complete this round-trip trek from the Kaibab Plateau Visitor Center to the North Rim of Grand Canyon National Park.

Rim Road/General Crook Trail Loop

The breathtaking drop-off of the Mogollon Rim is the highlight of this scenic drive. Panoramic views enable travelers to take in a plethora of fall colors in all their glory. It also provides plenty of opportunities to hike, bike and watch wildlife. The 54-mile loop starts at Clints Well, which is a two-hour drive from Phoenix.

Know Before You Go: Fall Drive Tips

- Fall colors generally start to set in around mid-October and remnants can linger through mid-November.
- The U.S. Forest Service has a [Fall Foliage website](#), complete with up-to-date information on regional leaf color predictions and foliage peaks.
- Have a solid set of directions for your fall drive. Build your itinerary, including all the stops you want to make along the way, with AAA's TripTik Travel Planner tool at AAA.com.

For more travel expertise, visit highroads.az.aaa.com.