

Written by AZFoothills.com
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Arizona is notorious for its valleys, sunsets, spas, golfing, and dining. Therefore, it is no surprise that Thanksgiving in Arizona is equally enthralling. With its numerous attractions, events, and things-to-do, you can rest assured that your time spent in Arizona is worth it. Whether you are traveling to Arizona in late November, celebrating Thanksgiving with family and friends, or just so happen to be in Arizona this time of year, there are numerous festive events and attractions to keep you invested in this holiday season.

The state of Arizona has a lot to offer at this time of the year. However, keeping in mind the prevalence of the COVID-19 pandemic, it is advised to practice as much social distancing as possible. While it may be difficult to meet your loved ones at this holiday season, it doesn't mean that you can't share your appreciation and support for them ([Thanksgiving eCards](#) are a perfect option to convey your admiring emotions from afar). Having said that, here is how you can celebrate Thanksgiving, the Arizona style.

A little bit of Arizona Thanksgiving History

Without a doubt, food is a Thanksgiving tradition shared by many throughout the nation. In the early days, Thanksgiving was an opportunity to commemorate the successful [harvest](#). Examples include the 1878 feast served up by Charles Trumbull Hayden at La Casa Vieja in Tempe, where 80 people shared a Thanksgiving meal. This tradition was continued by Scottsdale founder Winfield Scott near the start of the 20th century, where he served dinner to various guests at his ranch. This tradition has, therefore, been continuous among the valley residents. The people of Arizona dine with friends and family at home or in a restaurant. To keep the memory of Scott's dinner alive, some people carry on serving Thanksgiving dinner to the less fortunate at soup kitchens and various other places.

St. Vincent de Paul hosts 'Thanksgiving Meals throughout the Valley' every year, which serves about 4,500 Thanksgiving Day meals throughout the Valley. Keeping in mind the families inflicted with the devastating effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, you can keep this Arizona Thanksgiving tradition alive by contributing, such as cooking, preparing, and serving hot meals.

Fountain Hills Thanksgiving Day Parade

The highlight of the Thanksgiving in Arizona has, however, had to be the Fountain Hills Thanksgiving Day Parade, held about a 45-minute drive from Phoenix. This parade has been unique to Arizona for more than 20 years and continues to be on this special day. It features marching bands, floats, dancers, horses, motorcycles, and a grand marshal. However, the highlight has to be the surprise appearance by Santa Claus. Attending this joyful parade is a perfect way to start the Thanksgiving celebrations in Arizona.

Run or Walk the Turkey Trot

Arizona doesn't hold back on its Thanksgiving celebrations, which makes it extremely popular and joyful. The Turkey Trot, a competitive and exciting 5K and 10K run on scenic routes, is another Thanksgiving celebrating style unique to Arizona. While this run is enjoyment, it will definitely help you burn a few calories before the big Thanksgiving feast. The event also includes fun activities like a 1-mile Gobbles Dash for parents and kids aged 12 and under and a turkey Trot 50-yard dash for kids aged 6 and under.

Drive the Apache Trail or Hike

While driving might not be the first thing on the radar of people celebrating Thanksgiving, the scenic drive on the [Apache Trail](#) is worth it. This classic scenic drive is taken by many during the holiday season. The well-maintained road offers an incredible view of canyons, deserts, geologic formations, and lake views. The drive doesn't even require you to get out of your car; hence, a great option to celebrate Thanksgiving

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safely in this COVID-19 pandemic. Moreover, there are other recreational activities such as hiking or visiting a local riparian area.

The Territorial Cup, Tempe, AZ

Make sure to get yourself familiarized with the famous rivalry between ASU and UA. Being one of the best rivalries in collegiate sports, these teams compete headfirst every year on Thanksgiving weekend during the [Territorial Cup](#). The Wildcats and Sun Devils trade hosting duties and compete for the privilege of winning the NCAA's oldest trophy. This duel is the highlight for many in Arizona.

ZooLights, Phoenix, AZ

While you are lamenting the end of your feast, you can look forward to the Valleys' brightest holiday tradition at ZooLights. This continues Arizona's post-Thanksgiving holiday celebration by featuring an epic light display at the Phoenix Zoo. This includes various displays of a three-story lighted tree, music-in-motion shows, and sneak peeks at critters after dark.

These were just a few of the mentions of celebrating Thanksgiving in Arizona in their style. There are several other things like ordering a slice of pie from the longtime establishment Rock Springs Café, the oldest independently owned restaurant, or making a trip to Von Hanson's Meat and Spirits, the go-to spot for Thanksgiving Turkeys.