

Choo Choo! Where to See Trains in Arizona

Written by Aubrey Martin

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Photo Courtesy of the Grand Canyon Railway

Once home to the wild west, it is no surprise that Arizona possesses some of the most exclusive railroad experiences in the country. The days of locomotives proved to be significant economically, historically and culturally. We decided to do a round up of a few spots that succeed at keeping the pleasure that once-accompanied railways alive.



Grand Canyon Railway (pictured)

[The Grand Canyon Railway](#) has been transporting passengers through Grand Canyon Country since 1901. Born from the wild west, the locomotives have since been refurbished and now carry guests from William's enchanting forest to the South Rim of the Grand Canyon. The trek consists of 65 miles filled with the Colorado Plateau's versatile landscapes. Not only will guests experience the best of Arizona's pines and prairies but receive live entertainment from charming musicians unique to the west and frolicsome cowboys. For a truly unique experience, the fleet is as diverse as the landscape it voyages, offering guests options of vintage pullman cars, café cars, dome cars, luxury cars and more.

Verde Canyon Railroad

Delve into the Arizona's unparalleled landscape with Verde Canyon's vintage railway. [The Verde Canyon Railroad](#) invites guests to travel through twenty miles of Sedona's notorious red rocks, vistas and wildlife. Since 1912, the train has inhabited the two percent of Arizona's landscape where high desert transforms into beautiful banks. The unique excursion showcases the Verde River's glistening water, located between the canyon's untouched walls. As unique as the land it travels, the railroad uses two of the 10 FP7 locomotives left in North America. These powerful iron horses pull five cars consisting of a comfortable first-class, intimate caboose for smaller parties, one-of-a-kind locomotive ride-along in the engine's cab, traditional pullman seats, and exclusive open-air seating. The four-hour tour is complete with food and drink options, climate control, enjoyable music and informational narrations.



McCormick-Stillman Park (pictured)

Scottsdale's very own [McCormick-Stillman Railroad Park](#) was recently named best park and open space in the country by ELGLKnope. Not only is the park a historical hub but unique spot to experience an exclusive train ride. On Saturdays and Sundays, the Arboretum Train travels through McCormick-Stillman's two acres of desert. After 10 minutes of breathtaking views unique to the Valley, guests can plunge into United

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States' history in the Scottsdale Railroad Museum. The museum contains Arizona's Merci car sent by France after WWII, the copper-hauling Engine No. 6 built in 1907, The Roald Amundsen Pullman Car used by every president from Herbert Hoover to Dwight Eisenhower and much more. Entrance to the nationally renowned park is free. Guests can board the Arboretum Train for \$3 and enter the museum for \$2.

Century Grand – Platform 18

[Century Grand](#) is a new local concept that transports its guests back in time to the roaring 20's. Created by Barter & Shake Creative Hospitality, the experience is modeled after a train station one may have walked into during the Prohibition Era. Century Grand is complete with craft cocktails, unique spirits, one-of-a-kind wines, beer options and locally-sourced food served from a rolling cart. For a truly extraordinary experience, the staff is costumed as porters, ticket takers and conductors. Century Grand's main bar, Platform 18, is modeled after the presidential Roald Amundsen Pullman Car, located at McCormick-Stillman Park. The 90-minute ride through a mountainous terrain includes award-winning cocktails ranging from mixes of Perrier-Jouët Champagne to Tennessee Whiskey. Both experiences bring historical fiction stories to life, awakening the fun that accompanied the twenties. Century Grand is located off Indian School Road and highly encourages reservations.



Arizona Railway Museum

The [Arizona Railway Museum](#) is a nonprofit historical organization aimed at the acquisition, restoration and preservation of railway equipment. Located in Chandler, the museum has obtained over 30,000 artifacts dated as the early 1900's, including classic rail cars, open cabooses, multiple engines, track tools and much more. The attraction is open every weekend from noon to 4 p.m. Admission is free, but donations are highly appreciated.

Maricopa Live Steamers Railroad Club (pictured)

Interested in preserving traditions of the railroad, The Maricopa Live Steamers Railroad Heritage Preservation Society is a local club that build scale locomotives and diesels or just enjoy railroading. From now until April, the club offers free rides every first and third Saturday and Sunday of the month, from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Each ride is approximately 30 to 40 minutes through the desert's landscape. The experience is a great way to support a local organization while learning more about the Southwest. For more information, visit maricopalivestreamers.com.



Old Tucson (pictured)

Old Tucson's well known wild west experience includes an expedition through Tucson's Sonoran Desert on the C.P. Huntington Train. Throughout the voyage, the train engineer will carry out an informational narration about Arizona's unique landscape and wild west. For more information, visit oldtucson.com.

Southern Arizona Transportation Museum

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Originally built in 1880, the City of Tucson purchased the Southern Pacific Railroad Depot in 1998 to restore as a transportation museum. The depot contains rare artifacts like, the Southern Pacific Locomotive #1673 who got its start as a coal burner in 1900 and the Cornelia and Gila Bend Railroad Boxcar #203, built in 1918. This beloved experience, unique to Arizona, is located just north of Toole Avenue. To learn more, visit tucsonhistoricdepot.org.



Goldfield Ghost Towns (pictured)

[Goldfield Ghost Town](#) is home to Arizona's only narrow gauge train. The now historic gold mining town is located off Apache Trail and brings Arizona's wild west back to life. As any neighborhood of the wild west would, Goldfield consists of a railroad. A 36-in. gauge train with a Plymouth diesel pulls a passenger car and caboose through the once booming town for an entertaining 20-minute ride and narration. The experience ranges from \$7 to \$10 and is free for children four or younger.

Wildlife World Zoo Aquarium and Safari Park

The Wildlife World Zoo Aquarium and Safari Park houses Arizona's largest collection of exotic animals. The park invites guests to board their [African Safari Train](#) for an expedition through the plains of Africa filled with endangered antelope, gazelles, ostriches and more. The trip is five-eighths of a mile, complete with an informational narration.