

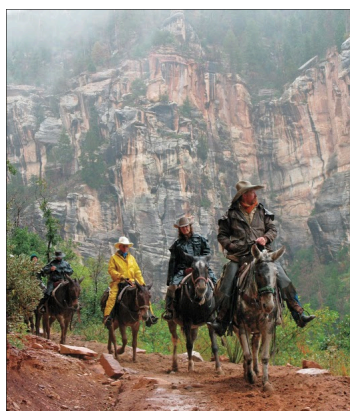
The Big 100: 100 Things to See and Do in Arizona

Written by Arizona Foothills Magazine

Monday, 04 August 2014 09:41 - Last Updated Thursday, 07 August 2014 17:37



Story by Caitie Andreen, Melissa Larsen and Ashley Pearlstein



10 Outdoor Excursions

With perfect weather nearly year round, Arizona does not fall short when it comes to outdoor activities. From hiking and biking trails to rafting down the Grand Canyon, Arizona has proven to be one of the nation's premier outdoor-adventure states.

Hot Air Ballooning

A number of hot air ballooning companies in the state offer beautiful and scenic sunset and sunrise floats. Passengers aboard the hot air balloon can enjoy the thrill of floating over the beautiful desert scenery. Flights are available over a vast majority of the Phoenix Metropolitan area, Tucson as well as up north. Five to try: Fleur de Tucson, fleurdetucson.net; Rainbow Ryders Inc., rainbowryders.com; Monument Valley Balloon Company, monumentvalleyballooncompany.com; Arizona Hot Air Balloon Expeditions, arizonahotairballoons.com; Hot Air Expeditions Inc., hotairexpeditions.com.

Pink Jeep Tours in Sedona

Nestled in the Verde Valley, the enchanting red rocks of Sedona offer a plethora of activities for tourists. Visitors can stay at Sedona's luxurious resorts while partaking in the many adventure excursions available. Not only can one scale the red rocks of Oak Creek Canyon on foot, adventure seekers can take a sightseeing tour with Pink Jeep Tours, a staple company for one of the most popular ways to explore all Sedona has to offer. Pink Jeep Tours are also available at the Grand Canyon. pinkjeeptours.com.

Skydiving in Eloy

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If you're looking to take the leap of faith and check off one of the biggest milestones on your bucket list, look no further than Arizona's backyard. Eloy is home to one of the largest drop zones and one of the most highly acclaimed skydiving companies in the nation. Thanks to AZ Skydive, exploring the desert sky via a daring parachute jump is a safe and feasible option. Jumpers will take a plane up to the heights of 13,000 feet where they will then jump tandem with a professional skydiver on their backs. AZ Skydive offers tandem jumps, coaching and training. skydiveaz.com.

Fossil Springs in Strawberry

Located in the beautiful Tonto National Forrest, Fossil Springs is a beautiful crystal clear swimming hole just a short hike away from the cute town of Strawberry. Weather depending, there is a road leading up to Fossil Creek open during certain times of the year. However, if the road is closed during your visit, you have a better excuse to hike. trails.com.

Grand Canyon with a Twist

Not many states can claim they have one of the Seven Wonders of the World in its backyard. When one makes the eight-hour drive out to the Grand Canyon to gaze upon its awe-inspiring depths, one can do much more than merely look at the steep-sided canyon. The canyon offers a variety of adventurous activities for visitors to partake in. Visitors can explore the canyon from the sky by taking a helicopter ride over the vast landscape or one can even hike into the canyon and spend a night on its desert floor. Whichever adventure excursion you are seeking, surrounding tourism companies give visitors several options to make your dream Grand Canyon adventure possible. We recommend Papillon Grand Canyon Helicopters, the world's largest aerial sightseeing company for helicopter rides. Staying at Phantom Ranch is the go-to choice when opting to spend the night at the bottom of the Canyon. papillon.com; grandcanyonlodges.com/lodging/phantom-ranch.

Wine & Dine Tour of Jerome

For those who enjoy a more relaxing excursion into the great outdoors, strolling through the beautiful vineyards of Jerome on a nice winetasting weekend getaway could be the perfect escape for you. Jerome is notorious for its wineries and tasting experiences. Whether you're looking for a romantic rendezvous with your partner or a fun outing with friends, this tour around Jerome and the Sedona region with stops to taste wine along the way is the perfect way to take in the spectacular views of Jerome. www.toursofjerome.com/wine-and-dine-adventure.

Kartchner Caverns

Kartchner Caverns State Park is an Arizona state gem featuring a cave with 2.4 miles of passages to explore and marvel at. This cave, the tallest natural column formation below ground, is something people travel from all around the world to see—but we have in our own backyard. Marvel at this breathtaking underground world of hidden limestone caves, often picnicking along the way. azstateparks.com/parks/kaca/.

River Rafting

When it comes to river rafting experience, Arizona has got you covered. Tourists and residents can raft the adventurous Colorado River, the scenic Verde River and several others. The Salt River also offers a more laidback float with friends. Whether you're looking for an experience comparable to a lazy river or an adventurous white water rafting trip, these river-rafting experiences will give you unforgettable memories. oars.com/grandcanyon; sedonaadventuretours.com.

Antelope Canyon

Antelope Canyon, also known as "Corkscrew Canyon," is an adventurous travel destination with discoveries around every corner. Tourists can

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hike into the magical world of this natural beauty or take a four-wheel tour through Antelope Canyon Tours, a Navajo-owned business that strives to immerse its customers in the beauty of the area, providing geology facts along the way. antelopecanyon.com.

A House Boat on Lake Powell

Lake Powell, a reservoir on the Colorado River between Utah and Arizona, is a major vacation destination. Visitors often rent a house boat and spend time doing an array of outdoor activities like fishing, watersports, camping and much more. This warm water paradise has nearly 2,000 miles of shoreline, making it the ultimate stomping ground for both a relaxing and adventurous vacation. lakepowell.com.

—Caitie Andreen



23 Dining Dos

Whether they offer prized panoramas or mouthwatering pies, Arizona is home to some of the nation's most amazing dining experiences.

Did you know that Arizona is home to several winners of the prestigious James Beard Foundation Award? Taste the award-winning eats of Nobuo Fukuda at Phoenix-based **Nobuo at Teeter House** (winner for his work at Sea Saw in 2007); Chris Bianco at Phoenix's **Pizzeria Bianco** (2003); Janos Wilder of **Downtown Kitchen + Cocktails** in Tucson (won for his work at Janos in 2000); Christopher Gross at **Christopher's Restaurant and Crush Lounge** at Biltmore Fashion Park (won for her work at Christopher's in 1995); and Vincent Guerithault at Phoenix's longtime **Vincent on Camelback** (1993). nobuofukuda.com; pizzeriabianco.com; christophersaz.com; downtownkitchen.com; vincentsoncamelback.com.

James Beard Foundation Award nominee and two-time winner of *Arizona Foothills Magazine's* Valley's Top Chef, Kevin Binkley is a culinary force to be reckoned with. At his flagship restaurant, **Binkley's Restaurant** in Cave Creek, the chef specializes in a selection of mouthwatering amuse-bouche. Set aside some time to savor a tasting of these luscious little bites. binkleysrestaurant.com.

One of the Valley's most unique dining experiences comes courtesy of **POSH Improvisational Cuisine**. At this choose-your-own-adventure Scottsdale restaurant, Chef Joshua Hebert and his team whip on an amazing meal for their diners—and you don't know what you're getting until it is sitting in front of you. Diners are asked to simply fill out a questionnaire to find out their likes, dislikes and allergies, and Chef Hebert gets to work creating a multi-course meal masterpiece that can include everything from foie gras to frog legs. poshscottsdale.com.

For more than 30 years, **Rock Springs Café**, located about 30 minutes north of Phoenix, has attracted hungry travelers from far and wide who crave a slice of the café's world-famous pies. The pies, which can now be ordered online and delivered via FedEx, range from traditional and tasty cream and fruit pies to specialty desserts like Jack Daniels pecan pie. rockspringscfe.com.

A Valley landmark since 1932 when it was constructed by chewing gum legend William Wrigley Jr., the **Wrigley Mansion** has recently undergone a refresh including the addition of new eats and cocktails. Known as a Phoenix Point of Pride, Sunday brunch at the famed Geordie's restaurant is a must. wrigleymansion.com.

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Arizona is brimming with beauty—from desert landscape and mountainous terrain to twinkling city lights and lovely lakes. So what could be grander than savoring an amazing meal while taking in such sights? Try a few of these dining-with-a-view destinations. In the Valley, **J&G Steakhouse** at The Phoenician, **elements** at Sanctuary on Camelback, **Talavera** at Four Seasons Resort Scottsdale at Troon North, the revolving rooftop restaurant **Compass Arizona Grill** at Hyatt Regency Phoenix, **Orange Sky** at Talking Stick Resort and **Different Pointe of View** at Pointe Hilton Tapatio Cliffs all proffer amazing mountain panoramas (and incredible fine-dining cuisine). North of the Valley, the **Rainbow Room** at Lake Powell Resort gives diners front-row seats of the glistening lake while water lovers will also savor Oak Creek views at **L'Auberge Restaurant** in Sedona (along with a pleasant soundtrack of babbling water). To enjoy Sedona's majestic red rock up close and personal, as well as some tapas, grab at table at **View 180** at Enchantment Resort. jgsteakhousescottsdale.com; sanctuaryoncamelback.com; talaverarestaurant.com; phoenix.hyatt.com; talkingstickresort.com; tapatiocliffshilton.com; lakepowell.com; lauberge.com; enchantmentresort.com.

Thanks to Arizona's super-mild weather and super-awesome culinary scene, the state is a hotbed of top-notch year-round culinary festivals. In the spring, the **Scottsdale Culinary Festival**—still one of the biggest culinary events in the nation—attracts more than 60,000 foodies for its signature events like Eat, Drink and Be Pretty and the Great Arizona Picnic. **Devoured Phoenix Culinary Classic** at Phoenix Art Museum and **Arizona Wine and Dine** at Scottsdale Quarter are springtime favorites thanks to high-end culinary presentations. Come summertime, revelers enjoy great eats and drinks in the cool air at the **Flagstaff Wine and Food Festival**, which takes place at the Pepsi Amphitheater at Fort Tuthill County Park. In the fall, Arizonans spice things up with the mighty popular **Arizona Taco Festival** which celebrates, you guessed it, tacos, tequila and more. scottsdalefest.org; devouredphoenix.com; azwineanddine.com; pepsiamp.com; aztacofestival.com.

—Melissa Larsen



Bottoms Up

Regardless of your drinking preference (suds or spirits?), Arizona is home to a slew of delicious sipping experiences.

From Tucson to Flagstaff and everywhere in between, Arizona is home to many top-notch breweries. And the best way to experience the state's top craft beers? A brewery tour, of course. Arizona Brewery Tours offers various public and private options for enjoying beer flights at some of Arizona's most popular breweries (you can expect to taste around 15 to 18 samples). Most tours comprise visiting three breweries via a chauffeured bus, a meal at one of the breweries, a behind-the-scenes look at the beer-making process—and more. AZ Brew Hops has tour packages for four levels of beer lover, from novice to pro. The company, which was founded in 2011, offers tours throughout the state. azbrew.com; azbrewhops.com.

All 50 states currently have wineries, Arizona included. To experience all the grape goodness that the state has to offer, **Arizona Wine Growers Association** has three easy-to-follow, printable wine trails that span the state: Verde Valley Wine Trail, Sonoita Wine Trail and Willcox Wine Trail. arizonawine.org.

Mark your calendars: Feb. 15-21 marks **Arizona Beer Week** and **Arizona Cocktail Week**. During Arizona Beer Week, presented by The Arizona Craft Brewers Guild and kicking off with the popular Strong Beer Festival, beer lovers throughout the state get to enjoy seminars, pairing dinners, festivals and much more goodness to tap into. Arizona Cocktail Week means dozens of local educational seminars, interactive tastings, cocktail competitions, pool parties and more—all devoted to the best the spirits world has to offer. arizonabeerweek.com; www.arizonacocktailweek.com.

—Melissa Larsen

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3 Luxury Spa-ing in Tucson

With the beautiful backdrop of the Sonoran Desert, Tucson is a great place for relaxation and rejuvenation. Here are three luxury Tucson spas that will enhance your stress-free staycation.

Miraval

Miraval is a wellness luxury spa resort in Tucson that prides itself in relaxing and rejuvenating its guests. With innovative spa services intended to balance your mind, body and heart, the Miraval experience is much more than a spa. Along with relaxing services like body renewal rituals, hair care, manicures, massages and reflexology, the experience features activities like art and photography, yoga, meditation, nutrition and golf. A stay at Miraval will not only open you up to a world of healthy, relaxing living, but will also lead you down a path of balance in life.

miravalresorts.com.

Canyon Ranch

Canyon Ranch provides more than a relaxing spa day or weekend; it provides an array of “healthy pleasures” that help create a healthier, happier you. As one of the top health resorts in the country, Canyon Ranch understands the importance of nutrition, fitness, stress relief and balance of mind. The spa is home to a variety of unique and traditional spa services that will have guests completely stress-free in no time. Try the Detoxifying Body Ritual, which cleanses the body with Moroccan mint tea, a coffee scrub, a clay application to draw out impurities, and more. Afterwards, enjoy a calming massage that will complete your detox journey. canyonranch.com/tucson.

The Ritz-Carlton, Dove Mountain

Nestled in the heart of the Sonoran Desert in Marana (just outside of Tucson), the Ritz-Carlton, Dove Mountain embodies the essence of “luxury spa-ing.” The spa uses ancient therapeutic rituals to relax the mind and body. Try a Hohokam Stone Massage complete with warm, mineral-rich basalt stones that give your body energy through the earth. For healing purposes, experience the Desert Gemstone Ritual, which begins by allowing your spirit to choose which gemstone suits it, then treats your ailments with a foot soak, herbal tea, exfoliation and a soothing full-body massage. “A day at our spa offers a full array of wellness and beauty opportunities, from enjoying spa and salon treatments to healthful spa dining to enjoying the serenity pool complex and cabanas,” says Marysell Diaz-Garcia, spa director. ritzcarlton.com/dovemountain.

—Ashley Pearlstein

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10 for Tots

Check out 10 must-see, must-do local attractions for the littlest Arizonans.

Bearizona

Bearizona, located in Williams, is an exciting wildlife park that allows visitors to drive through the wilderness and see the wildlife in their natural habitat. Visitors will see black bears, red foxes, wolves, bobcats, bison, porcupines and more—all while in the comfort of their own vehicles. The park is open from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. seven days a week and costs \$20 per adult, with discounts for children and seniors. bearizona.com.

McCormick-Stillman RailRoad Park

Located in the heart of Scottsdale, the McCormick-Stillman Railroad Park is incredibly unique and great for children of all ages. Children can take a ride on the Paradise and Pacific Railroad tracks, or hop on the antique carousel. The park also boasts a number of shops, exhibits, playgrounds and picnic ramadas for any occasion. While admission to the park is free, railroad tickets are \$1 each. The park offers so many activities for the whole family including opportunities to learn, relax, and get out and be active. therailroadpark.com.

Desert Botanical Garden

The Desert Botanical Garden in Phoenix is a beautiful and educational way for children to spend time outdoors in a safe environment. With a variety of summer camps, classes and events, the garden is alive with exciting opportunities every day. "The garden is a great place for kids to explore year-round, whether as a school group, with your whole family, or independently in summer camp," says Emily Morris, the Informal Science Education Coordinator for the garden. Kids can walk along the trails, learning about all of the unique desert plants, and maybe even see a few tadpoles or dragonflies in the Desert Oasis. dbg.org.

Sea Life Arizona Aquarium

Sea Life Arizona, located at Arizona Mills Mall in Tempe, allows visitors to get up close to a vast array of ocean creatures including sharks, rays, seahorses, tropical fish and more. The aquarium, designed especially for kids, provides an interactive and educational experience through its quiz trail, touch pools, fun facts posted throughout, and displays of more than 5,000 sea creatures. Tickets are \$14.40 per person online, or \$10.40 for children ages 3-12 years. At the gate, tickets are \$18 per person, or \$13 for children ages 3-12 years. Don't miss the newly-opened Turtle Shelter, which puts guests "nose-to-nose" with a variety of species of freshwater turtles. visitsealife.com.

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Tucson Children's Museum

The Children's Museum in Tucson has something intriguing and fun for every child. At \$8 per person, the museum is an affordable and educational way to beat the heat with the whole family. Children can visit the Art Studio and create paintings and other artwork, or they can explore the Investigation Station which offers a plethora of interactive, hands-on stations that will keep the kids learning and entertained. childrensmuseumtucson.org.

Apple Annie's Orchard

Apple Annie's Orchard, located in Wilcox, allows visitors to pick their own fruit and vegetables right off of the trees and plants. Children often enjoy the fresh air and open spaces, and the delicious hand-picked fruits at the end of the day. Apple Annie's is open daily July 1 through October. Special events include Peach Mania, Apple Harvest, Fall Pumpkin Celebration and more. "Many kids and adults have never seen where and how their fruit and vegetables are grown," says Mandy Kirkendall, manager of Apple Annie's, "so it's fun and educational!" appleannies.com.

Out of Africa Wildlife Park

The Out of Africa Wildlife Park in Camp Verde allows visitors to get a close look at intriguing and exciting wildlife. Children will love witnessing Bengal and Siberian tigers interact in the Tiger Splash pool, petting various animals with the Creature Feature, getting hands-on at the Giant Snake Show, or learning about the wildlife on the 40-minute African Bush Safari tour. General admission tickets are \$32.75, with discounts for seniors, children and military members. outofafricapark.com.

Arizona Science Center

The Arizona Science Center makes science fun for children and families. Children can learn how the human body works and functions, from the inside out, with the All About Me gallery. The Flight Zone, the center's newest gallery, teaches about the science of flight and gives kids the opportunity to climb into the fuselage of an actual airplane. With an endless variety of other interactive exhibits, educational IMAX featured films, and a state-of-the-art Planetarium, the Arizona Science Center provides enough fun for the whole day. General admission tickets are \$16.95 per person with discounts for children and seniors. azscience.org.

Rawhide at Wild Horse Pass

Cowboy up at Rawhide at Wild Horse Pass. Guests can enjoy the authentic old western town through Live Action Stunt shows featuring the toughest cowboys around, the interactive petting zoo with Rawhide animals, a ride on the Butterfield Stagecoach, rock climbing on the Deadman's Drop, panning for (fool's) gold and more. After a fun-filled day of activity, enjoy a tasty western meal at the Steakhouse. Admission to the Western Town is free, and parking is \$5 per vehicle. The kids will love the hustle and bustle of the old west when visiting Rawhide. rawhide.com.

The Children's Museum of Phoenix

With a goal to engage the "minds, muscles and imaginations of children and the grown-ups who care about them," The Children's Museum of Phoenix offers hands-on exhibits for children aged birth to 10. The Art Studio is a fun place for kids to express themselves creatively while the Market, complete with make-believe foods and mini shopping carts, is a paradise for role-playing. General admission is \$11 with discounts for seniors. childrensmuseumofphoenix.org.

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—Ashley Pearlstein



7 Holiday Hotspots

Here are the top six spots that turn Arizona into a winter wonderland come holiday season.

Polar Express

The Grand Canyon Railway comes alive each holiday season to reenact the classic children's tale, *Polar Express*, by Chris Van Allsburg. Guests will hop on the train in Williams and be transported to the "North Pole," complete with hot chocolate, cookies, Santa and his reindeer. "It is a 1.25-hour journey to the North Pole with singing, hot cocoa and cookies, and a reading of the book on the trip. And, of course, Santa boards the train for the trip back to present a special gift to children of all ages," says Bruce Brossman, director of sales. Ticket prices vary based on time and age. thetrain.com/polarexpress.

North Pole Experience

Families will love being transported into Santa's Workshop with the North Pole Experience. Children can build toys with the elves, visit the toy factory and talk one-on-one with Santa. Located in Flagstaff, the Experience begins with a magical trolley ride through the magic portal and into Santa's authentic workshop. Tickets are \$42 per person in the daytime, or \$55 per adult and \$49 per child in the evening. northpoleexperience.com.

Zoolights

Zoolights at the Phoenix Zoo is an event unlike any other. With 3.7 million lights and 700 light displays, the zoo shimmers with holiday spirit. Guests can grab a hot chocolate and take a stroll through the zoo, admiring all of the animal-themed light displays. Families will enjoy watching the breathtaking Music in Motion light shows and riding on the Polar Slide and the FlyWire. The zoo also features special events throughout the season to accompany Zoolights. Ticket prices vary. phoenixzoo.org/event-items/zoolights.

Christmas at the Princess

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Each year, the Fairmont Scottsdale Princess comes alive with holiday cheer and transforms into a winter wonderland. The Valley resort features the Desert Ice Skating Rink; more than 1.6 million lights around the resort's breathtaking lagoons; a four-story musical tree complete with 65,000 twinkling lights; and Kringle's Korner which features toys, ornaments and holiday gifts for the whole family. The event is open to the public. scottsdaleprincess.com/seasonal-events/christmas-at-the-princess.

Schnepf Farms Winter Wonderland

For three weeks of the holiday season, Schnepf Farms is made over into a jolly Winter Wonderland. Guests can skate around on the eco-friendly ice skating rink, pick their very own Christmas trees, go snow sledding, attend a bonfire, have breakfast with Santa, hop on one of the hayrides, feed Santa's deer and more. The entire family will enjoy all of the holiday-themed activities located in Queen Creek. Prices vary depending on each activity. schnepffarms.com.

Winterhaven

For 60-plus years, the neighborhood of Winterhaven has put on a spectacular Festival of Lights. While the event is Winterhaven's gift to the community, they ask for donations to the Tucson Community Food Bank from all who can donate. As one of the longest running festivals in the country, Winterhaven is a beloved tradition in Southern Arizona. Guests can walk or drive through the neighborhood, located in Tucson, and see all the beautiful light displays. Families will also love the hayrides and trolley rides offered through the event. winterhavenfestival.org.

Las Noches de las Luminarias

Desert Botanical Garden turns into a twinkling masterpiece as more than 8,000 hand-lit luminaria bags light the pathways during Las Noches de las Luminarias. Guests are invited to enjoy carolers and hot drinks during this anticipated annual event.

—Ashley Pearlstein



Expert Advice

Four tourism pros pick their Arizona essentials.

Sherry Henry, director of the Arizona Office of Tourism, suggests five spots to explore outside of the Valley...

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Go Up in Altitude in Flagstaff. Take the family up the Arizona Snowbowl's Summer Scenic Skyride for great wildlife viewing and an unforgettable glimpse of the surrounding area. arizonasnowbowl.com

Enjoy the Natural Beauty of Patagonia. Venture to the friendly town of Patagonia, a crossroads for avian enthusiasts and nature lovers from all over the world. Tucked away in the rolling hills of southern Arizona, Patagonia Lake State Park offers a quiet reprieve for the day. Rent a canoe or rowboat, and enjoy the plethora of wildlife viewing and shoreside stroll—or cast a line to fish for bass, bluegill, freshwater trout and catfish. azstateparks.itinio.com/patagonialake.

Explore Infamous Territory in Yuma. On July 1, 1876, seven inmates entered Arizona Territory's first prison—the Territorial Prison at Yuma—and were locked into the new cells they'd built themselves. Now a museum, you can walk through the actual strap-iron cells and solitary chamber, and experience the life they had to endure. yumaprisson.org.

Discover Geological Wonders in Payson. Tucked away in a tiny valley surrounded by pine, The Tonto Natural Bridge geological wonder is believed to be the world's largest natural travertine bridge, with 150-foot-wide arches that expand 183 feet above the sparkling Pine Creek. Stand on top of the bridge at any of the four observation points, scale the rocks in the 400-foot tunnel running through the bridge's center or explore the canyon areas nearby. azstateparks.com/parks/TONA.

Hike the Chiricahuas. Explore the "Wonderland of Rock" in the Chiricahua National Monument, situated two hours Southeast of Tucson. Approximately 17 miles of trails make Chiricahua National Monument a favored excursion for hikers and birders. During a visit, tour the historic pioneer homestead known as Faraway Ranch. The ranch house, once inhabited by the Erickson family—the region's earliest European settlers—offers a glimpse into Arizona's pioneer history. You can also take the eight-mile paved drive, which unveils a scenic view of the park's natural beauty and diverse wildlife. nps.gov/chir.

Lynne Eve Kleinschmidt, concierge manager at Fairmont Scottsdale Princess, suggests these five excursions...

A waterfall taller than Niagara Falls: **Grand Falls (or Chocolate Falls)**. navajonationparks.org/htm/grandfalls.htm.

Where the wild burro roam: **Alamo Lake State Park**. azstateparks.com/Parks/ALLA.

Largest and oldest botanical garden in Arizona: **Boyce Thompson Arboretum**. arboretum.ag.arizona.edu.

Outdoor dreamland, from sunshine to snowfall: **Greer, Arizona**. greerarizona.com.

One of the most photographed spots on earth: **Monument Valley**. navajonationparks.org/htm/monumentvalley.

Emily Ginzl, senior manager of marketing at Scottsdale Fashion Square, suggests three of the Valley's most luxurious shopping experiences...

Luxury Service Personified: The Shopping Center Concierge

Mirroring resort-level hospitality, Concierge Desks at premier Macerich shopping centers serve as one-stop-shops offering visitor information, courtesy of the city convention and visitors bureau, package carry-out assistance and other welcome personal touches. And no one does it better than Peter Harden, Scottsdale Fashion Square's Roving Concierge, who truly is luxury service personified. For example, Harden has done everything from shop with comedian Robin Williams to seek out the perfect pair of earrings for an unsure gentleman to hold packages for shoppers while they use the dressing room. Harden makes it his business to deliver the ultimate in customer service to shoppers at Scottsdale Fashion Square, Arizona's largest retail powerhouse. Why should travelers seek out this luxury experience? The VIP treatment, of course. which always delivers smiles. fashionsquare.com.

Experiential Shopping Packages

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Whether visitors are best friends, a mother-daughter pair or spouses of busy business travelers, Macerich shopping centers offer unique and tailored experiences via Shop America Tours. These experiential shopping packages combine elements like retailer services, amenities, attractions and restaurants. Packages include SHOP & PLAY, SHOP & SPA, SHOP & SEE and SHOP & EXPLORE and range in price from \$15 to \$125. shopamericatours.com.

Luxury Shopping Tours provided by Spree! The Art of Shopping

Experience the red-carpet rollout during this three-hour excursion including transportation, shopping guide and personalized itinerary including the best-of-the-best from one-of-a-kind boutiques to internationally recognized stores. Tours start at \$295. azshoppingspree.com.

Diane Morris, lead concierge at Sanctuary on Camelback Mountain, suggests four Valley spots...

The **Apache Trail** is a beautiful 40 mile drive that follows an old stagecoach trail through the rugged Superstition Mountains. Highlights along the route include a ghost town, desert lakes, the town of Tortilla Flat, Roosevelt Dam and Native American ruins. Drive the entire route or turn around when the road changes from pavement to gravel. apachetrailarizona.com.

Taliesin West is a National Historic Landmark situated in the foothills of North Scottsdale. It was built in 1937 as Frank Lloyd Wright's winter home studio, and school of architecture. Guides take visitors around the property and into buildings where they will experience Frank Lloyd Wright's design genius firsthand. franklloydwright.org.

The **Musical Instrument Museum** in North Phoenix is the world's only global musical instrument museum. More than 6,000 instruments from around the world are on display. Visitors to the MIM can see, hear, and play instruments in the museum or enjoy live performances in the acoustically superb music theater. mim.org.

The **Heard Museum** in Downtown Phoenix is internationally recognized for its collections of Native American artifacts and contemporary art. Visitors delight in their ever-changing exhibits, excellent shopping and cultural festivals. heard.org.



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Save the Date

These signature events are must-attend attractions that keep the Valley exciting year round.

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JANUARY

Barrett-Jackson Auto Auction

This highly acclaimed collector car auction takes place every year in January. The 2015 auction will take place from Jan. 10 through Jan. 18. Each year, the auction attracts 200,000 of the top collectors from around the world. The auction features about 1,000 of the world's finest collector and special-interest automobiles. barrett-jackson.com.

Waste Management Phoenix Open

The 2015 Waste Management Phoenix Open will take place from Jan. 26 through Feb. 1. The first Phoenix Open dates back to 1932 and has been an annual event since 1939. Since then, the tournament has attracted the largest crowds on the PGA TOUR, earning the status as a premier golf tournament. wmphoenixopen.com.

PF Chang's Rock N' Roll Marathon

Each year, the PF Chang's Rock N' Roll Marathon and Half Marathon rocks its way into three of the Valley's biggest cities. This marathon attracts runners from all over the nation. This year's date is set for Jan. 18. runrocknroll.competitor.com/Arizona.

FEBRUARY

Sedona International Film Festival

Savor more than 160 films with other movie buffs—and a few celebrities and filmmakers, too—at the Sedona International Film Festival. The 2015 fest is Feb. 21 through March 1. sedonafilmfestival.org.

Arabian Horse Show

Nearly 2,000 of the finest horses gather at this annual horse show hosted at WestWorld. This year's show will take place from Feb. 12 to Feb. 22. scottsdaleshow.com.

Arizona Renaissance Festival

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This kid-friendly festival will take you back to all the glories of medieval times. From jousting tournaments to renaissance-style feasts, the Renaissance Festival brings a good time for all knights and ladies who attend. The Renaissance Festival will be open Feb. 7 through March 29 from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. royalfaires.com/arizona.

Tucson Rodeo

Throw on your cowboy boots and come out to this all-American annual event. The Tucson Rodeo, also known as La Fiesta de Los Vaqueros, is a must-attend. The upcoming rodeo will take place from Feb. 21 through March 1. tucsonrodeo.com.

MARCH

McDowell Mountain Music Festival

The likes of Ben Harper and Slightly Stoopid hit that stage at this much-loved annual concert, which is celebrating its 11th year. (This year's event is March 27 through March 29.) A nonprofit event, McDowell Mountain Music Festival exists to support, entertain and educate the community, the arts and families throughout the state. mmmf.com.

Ostrich Festival

This three-day festival is one of the most unique family-fun event that comes to the Valley. Not only will the event include the much-anticipated ostriches, the festival will also feature live performances from various artists, carnival rides, crafts, art and much more. This upcoming festival will take place from March 13 to March 15. ostrichfestival.com.

APRIL

Country Thunder Music Festival

Country music lovers from around the nation flock to Florence each year to camp out for four days of epic performances from top country artists. The upcoming festival will take place from April 9 to April 12. The lineup has yet to be released, but the festival is notorious for its performers. Past performers include the likes of Brad Paisley, Eric Church, Blake Shelton, Miranda Lambert and many other highly acclaimed country artists. arizona.countrythunder.com.

MAY

Queen Creek Peach Festival

On Saturdays and Sundays throughout the month of May, you can pick your own peaches at Schnepf Farms in Queen Creek. While tasting the

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sweet peaches, you will enjoy the beautiful surroundings of Schnepf Farms. schnepffarms.com.

Best of Our Valley Bash

Each year in May, *Arizona Foothills Magazine* hosts a Best of Our Valley bash in honor of the Best of Our Valley winners, as seen in the March issue. This stylish soiree features live entertainment, delish eats and some of the top tastemakers in the Valley. azfoothills.com.

JUNE

Made in Shade Beer Festival

The Made in Shade Beer Festival is a fun and festive event in Ft. Tuthill County Fairground and Park in Flagstaff. This June event features live music and other entertainment while attendees taste various local and non-local brews. azbeer.com.

Mighty Mud Mania

The Mighty Mud Mania began in 1976, and has since been an event Valley residents look forward to each year. This fun mud obstacle course has become a yearly tradition to kick off the Arizona summer. mightymudmania.com.

JULY

Fabulous Phoenix Fourth of July Celebration

This annual fireworks show in Steele Indian School Park is the largest free fireworks show in the Valley, attracting nearly 100,000 spectators from around metro Phoenix. This year marked the 29th annual fireworks show.

Prescott Frontier Days

Since 1888, Prescott Frontier Days has occurred annually over the 4th of July weekend. Yearly, the annual event hosts the World's Oldest Rodeo at the Prescott Rodeo Grounds. worldsoldestrodeo.com.

AUGUST

Arizona Cardinals Football

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The Arizona Cardinals begin their pre-season football games in August at the University of Phoenix Stadium in Glendale. These pre-season games are the perfect chance to get up close to the players before the season begins. arizonacardinals.com.

SEPTEMBER

The JOGS Tucson Gem and Jewelry Show

The JOGS Tucson Gem and Jewelry Show is a much-anticipated jewelry show bringing a variety of international dealers to one of the largest jewelry displays in Tucson. Attendees can view and purchase some of the finest gems, stones, gold and much more. This year's show will take place from Sept. 4 to Sept. 7. jogsshow.com.

OCTOBER

Arizona State Fair

The Arizona State Fair is an annual event held on the permanent fairgrounds at Encanto Village in Phoenix. The fair has more than just the standard fair with tasty treats and rides; it also features various live entertainment, like concerts from popular acts, hypnotists and petting zoos. This year's fair is open from Wednesday through Sundays from Oct. 10 until Nov. 2. azstatefair.com.

6th Annual Flagstaff Oktoberfest

Eat drink and be merry at this Flagstaff-based Oktoberfest celebration on Oct. 4. Enjoy a beer tent and rockin' music line-up. The event benefits Northern Arizona Food Bank. flagstaffoktoberfest.com.

NOVEMBER

Carefree Fine Arts and Wine Festival

Presented by Thunderbird Artists and the Fountain Hills Downtown Business Community, the Carefree Fine Arts and Wine Festival is an art collector's paradise. This year's festival is set for Oct. 31 through Nov. 2. www.thunderbirdartists.com.

Arizona International Auto Show

The Arizona International Auto Show is set for Thanksgiving weekend from Nov. 27 to Nov. 30. It will be held at the Phoenix Convention Center. Be sure to join in on the automotive excitement! autoshowphoenix.com.

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DECEMBER

Glendale Glitters

Each year, the city of Glendale puts on Glendale Glitters, an award-winning holiday lighting event. An eye-catching 1.5 million lights illuminate the beautiful historic Downtown Glendale. This lighting ceremony is free admission. glendaleaz.com.

Tostitos Fiesta Bowl

The upcoming Tostitos Fiesta Bowl is set for Dec. 31 at 3 p.m. The past seven national championship games have brought some of the best college football teams to the Valley, impacting Arizona's economy positively in a more than grand way. fiestabowl.org.

Tempe Town Lake Boat Parade

Each year, onlookers for the Tempe Town Lake Boat Parade gather around the Tempe Town Lake to witness a fantastic spectacle of hundreds of beautifully lit boats. millavenue.com/entertainment-and-events/fantasyoflights.