

San Diego to Phoenix Road Trip: Best Places to See on the Way

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A San Diego to Phoenix road trip is popular for those who are seeking a quick getaway from coastal life in San Diego.

Located just five and a half hours away by car, Phoenix is a desert oasis frequented by adventurers and city goers alike who are drawn to year-round sun and mild temperatures in Phoenix.

Not only does Phoenix offer dozens of attractions including the Desert Botanical Garden and the Phoenix Art Museum, but the short drive to Phoenix is packed with must-see historical sights, natural scenery, and wildlife parks.

Check out our list below of 8 highly-rated attractions to see when driving from San Diego to Phoenix!

Where Should I Stop While Driving from San Diego to Phoenix?

Where you should stop on your San Diego to Phoenix drive depends on the interests of you and those traveling with you. Most of the stops along this short road trip route are ideal for those with interests regarding nature and the outdoors.

Here are 8 of the most popular attractions to check out on your San Diego to Phoenix road trip:

Desert View Tower

The Desert View Tower is a historical landmark that was built in the 1920s. Today, the tower serves as a reminder of past travelers who ventured along Interstate 8. Visitors can enjoy viewing the tower from the outside, or can pay a small fee to climb up 65 stairs and enjoy views of rural California mountains. The lower floor of the tower also features a small souvenir shop.

The tower is located just over 60 miles outside of San Diego, making it an excellent place to stop at the beginning of your road trip.

Imperial National Wildlife Refuge



The Imperial National Wildlife Refuge is a protected area in Arizona that is home to a diverse array of plant and animal life. The refuge spans over 23,000 acres and includes habitats such as wetlands, sand dunes, and desert grasslands. It is a popular spot for birdwatching, with over 280 species of birds spotted within its borders.

In addition to its wildlife, the refuge offers various recreational activities such as hiking, fishing, and photography. For nature lovers, it is a must-see stop on a road trip from San Diego to Phoenix.

Castle Dome Mine Museum

If you have history buffs and or anyone interested in the Old West along for your road trip, add Castle Dome Mine Museum to your list. Located in Arizona, the museum features authentic mining equipment and artifacts from the late 1800s. Visitors can take a guided tour of the mine and see how gold and silver were extracted from the earth during the height of the mining boom.

In addition to indoor exhibits, the museum also offers interactive panning for gold and silver, so visitors can try their hand at prospecting.

El Dorado Hot Springs

El Dorado Hot Springs is a hidden oasis where you can relax and rejuvenate as you reach the end of your road trip. Visitors can soak in the hot spring pools or opt for a more private experience in one of the spring-fed tubs.

The property also has camping sites available for those who want to extend their stay, making this an excellent stop for those on longer road trips. Whether you're looking to escape the stresses of everyday life or just want to experience the beauty of the desert, El Dorado Hot Springs is the place to unwind.

Hassayampa River Preserve



The Hassayampa River Preserve is a beautiful nature preserve

located on the way to Phoenix in Wickenburg, Arizona. This stunning landscape is home to a wide variety of plants and animals, including many species of birds and reptiles. It is a popular spot for hiking, birdwatching, and picnics. The preserve regularly hosts educational programs and events, making it an ideal roadtrip stop for families and nature enthusiasts. If you enjoy the great outdoors, the Hassayampa River Preserve is definitely worth a visit on your road trip from San Diego to Phoenix.

Kofa National Wildlife Refuge

The Kofa National Wildlife Refuge is a diverse wildlife refuge in southwestern Arizona. The natural preserve is inhabited by a variety of local plants and animals. Many venture here to escape the heat and crowds of the city.

Visitors can embark on countless hikes to enjoy over 665,000 acres of Arizona's mountainous desert landscape. On longer roadtrips, it is an ideal stop for camping and stargazing.

White Tank Mountain Regional Park

White Tank Mountain Regional Park is an expansive desert park located in the western suburbs of Phoenix, Arizona. This park spans over 120,000 acres and is home to many species of birds, reptiles, and mammals. It features over 25 miles of hiking trails, including a challenging peak trail that leads to the top of White Tank Mountain.

The park features guided nature walks for those looking to learn

about the natural scenery. Stunning 360 views of Arizona's landscape make White Tank Mountain Regional Park the perfect place to watch the sunset after a long day of driving from San Diego.

Papago Park



Papago Park is located just outside of Phoenix, so it is a perfect final stop to end your road trip and be greeted with stunning views of downtown Phoenix. The popular Hole-In-The-Rock trail is a short .3 mile hike that rewards visitors with views of the city through an incredible sandstone formation. If you're arriving to Phoenix just in time for sunset, there is no better way to kick off your vacation in Phoenix than by stopping here to enjoy the scenery.

Things to Do Around Phoenix
The fun doesn't stop once your road trip is over! Phoenix is filled with an abundance of interesting activities. Here are a few things to do once you reach Phoenix:

Visit the Desert Botanical Garden – This garden is home to a wide variety of desert plants, including cacti, succulents, and wildflowers.

Check out the [Cannabist Dispensary](#) – Recreational marijuana has been legal in Arizona since 2020. Enhance your trip to Phoenix and unwind

with the state's finest selection of cannabis.

Check out the Phoenix Art Museum – This museum has a large collection of contemporary and classical art, as well as traveling exhibitions. Explore the Old Town Scottsdale – This area is filled with galleries, boutiques, and restaurants, and is a great place to spend an afternoon.

Visit the Phoenix Mercado – This outdoor market features food, art, and culture from the Latinx community in Phoenix. **Best Time to Go on the San Diego to Phoenix Road Trip**
Unlike San Diego, where residents enjoy year-round mild temperatures, summers in Phoenix can be extremely hot. If you plan to partake in outdoor adventures on your trip, it's best to avoid the summer months and go when temperatures are more bearable, typically from October to April.

It can get a little cool in the winter, but you can usually get by with a light jacket and most will find this weather more tolerable than the sweltering summers.

Final Thoughts on Road

Tripping from San Diego to Phoenix

A road trip from San Diego to Phoenix is a thrilling and memorable adventure. With a variety of interesting stops along the way, there is no shortage of things to see and do.

Whether you're interested in exploring the great outdoors or learning about the culture and

history of the region, you'll find a road trip to Phoenix to be incredibly rewarding. So pack your bags, hit the road, and discover all that this amazing journey has to offer!

Preserve: Know the rules for hunting

Bob Burns, Reporter

Jan 9, 2023

Fountain Hills Times

In recent weeks hikers and trailhead hosts at Adero Canyon Trailhead have reported hunters coming out of the Fountain Hills McDowell Mountain Preserve, which has raised the question as to what is permitted in the way of hunting within the Preserve.

The Arizona Game and Fish Department is the final authority on regulations related to hunting in the state, so The Times turned to local resident and AZ Game and Fish Education Coordinator Amy Burnett, or "Ranger Amy" as she is known locally. She provided some information in consultation with the Game and Fish Field Supervisor for the area.

"There are definitely a lot of misconceptions about hunting in the McDowells, and we'd love to help clear them up," Burnett told The Times in an email response. "The nuances involved with hunting within **McDowell Mountain Regional Park** (the Park) and McDowell Sonoran Preserve (the Preserve) are very intricate and require that a hunter who would like to use those areas do a lot of homework before heading out in the field.

"The Arizona Game and Fish Commission has sole authority to manage wildlife in the State of Arizona, meaning the Arizona Game and Fish Department (AGFD) is the only entity that can regulate hunting statewide, even across other jurisdictions such as cities, counties, National Forest etc. Those entities, like the Park/Preserve in these cases, can regulate how/where/when people can access and use the park. "For example, the Preserve has their rules laid out on their website at scottsdaleaz.gov/preserve/hunting-in-the-preserve."

According to Burnett, the regional county park and the preserve have archery only deer hunts, per Commission Order R12-4-321 and are in AGFD's Game Management Unit (GMU) 25M (the M indicates a metro GMU). Metro GMUs have additional restrictions, especially regarding firearms, due to the proximity to congested urban settings. The AGFD website has additional information about hunting in GMU 25M at azgfd.com/hunting/units/mesa/25m/.

The current archery deer season in GMU 25M began Dec. 9, 2022, and continues through Jan. 31, 2023, or until the harvest limit is met. Hunting in parks and preserves opened by Commission Order is not permitted within a quarter mile of any occupied building, developed picnic area, developed campground, shooting range or golf course. Park trails are not considered a developed area.

Regulations state a hunter may only take one deer per calendar year. Archery hunters must report their harvest to AGFD within 48 hours of taking a deer.

Hunters are required to take the edible portions of the game meat and proof of gender (the antlers in most cases) out of the field with them. Oftentimes hunters will field dress an animal, removing those parts specifically and packing them out in backpacks, etc. There is no legal requirement to remove the non-edible portions of the animal from the field (bones, hide and entrails).

Anyone who is aware of a situation where game has been taken illegally may contact the AZG&F Operation Game Thief 24-hour hotline at 1-800-352-0700.

See What's So Special About Mesa: The Ultimate Travel Guide & Things to Do There

BY NICHOLAS MAYAMBA

PUBLISHED JAN 8, 2023

The Travel

Mesa, Arizona is a year-round travel destination with tons of things to do in any season.

Mesa is the third largest city in Arizona and a suburb on the outskirts of the Phoenix Metropolitan Area. With approximately 500,000 residents calling it home, Mesa is more populous than actual cities like Miami and New

Orleans, earning it the title of America's largest suburb.

Its location in the Valley of the Sun also means the area receives more than 300 days of sunshine in a year, which is just what snowbirds escaping harsh winters in the north come looking for.

Mesa is surrounded by the Tonto National Forest and Sonoran, but extra attractions make it the ultimate desert playground. From historical sites and beautiful [rock formations on desert landscapes](#) to countless outdoor leisure activities and the famous [Fresh Foodie Trail](#), there is enough to warrant a visit by any ardent adventurer.

Here is a comprehensive guide to visiting Mesa and the best things to do there!

Best Time To Visit Mesa

Mesa's sunny climate allows the city to welcome tourists all year round. However, the best time to visit is October based on affordable accommodation costs, cheaper flight fares, and more accommodating weather.

February sees the most tourist activity in the city, meaning flight and hotel prices experience a considerable hike.

Tourists are advised to book well in advance to avoid the peak season extortionist prices.

Summer in Mesa features temperatures as high as 106 degrees Fahrenheit, so tourists should brace themselves for the blistering heat. The hottest month is July, with an average

temperature of 102 degrees Fahrenheit.

July is also the rainiest month and the best time to see the sights as the sun stays around the longest during this time. Remember to pack t-shirts and shorts for the warm weather and maybe an umbrella for the mild showers.

During winter, night temperatures can be unforgiving, dropping to a low of 42 degrees Fahrenheit. It is advisable to pack a warm jacket and thermal blanket when traveling to Mesa at this time.

Spring season is also an excellent time for tourists looking for great deals. There aren't many tourists in town, which reduces competition for accommodation and other amenities.

The lowest season is fall, and hotels are at the cheapest. Temperatures range between 104 and 73 degrees Fahrenheit, with little to no precipitation.

What To Know When Visiting Mesa

Mesa has earned the reputation for being the ultimate desert playground, a credit to its numerous attractions, fine tourism weather, and endless outdoor adventures.

The area boasts multiple museums, [historical landmarks](#), and cultural artifacts of the native Hohokam community that once resided in the area.

The weather is generally sunny, which is perfect for outdoor activity all year round and guests from around the country

come to Mesa to escape harsh winters.

Mesa has a lot of great neighborhoods waiting to be explored and receptive communities; tourists will have a wonderful time interacting with the locals and learning about their ways.

Finally, the [city's food culture is pretty diverse](#), with restaurants and eateries serving local and international cuisines, including Italian, French, American, Polish, Brazilian, Asian, and Mexican.

Where To Eat In Mesa

Mesa's rich tourism culture has led to a diverse society that can be seen in the kind of culinary offerings in the city. From French and Polish to Mexican and Hawaiian cuisines, tourists will be spoilt for choice as they sample the tantalizing flavors.

Fittingly, more than 600 restaurants, cafés, and food houses are spread across the region to cater to this. If tourists don't mind a bit of spice in their meals, they can pass by the [Indian Oven](#) on Gilbert Road. Specializing in authentic Indian cuisine, this is a nice joint to enjoy a laid-back meal and sample their special vegan menu.

For pizza lovers, the [Organ Pizza Stop](#) offers a unique dining experience, allowing guests to request and enjoy live music played on the organ while biting on their favorite treat.

[T.C. Eggington's](#) is another location famous for its fantastic breakfast and extensive menu offering variety.

Mesa's nightlife is just as impressive as the daytime dining experience, with distinct neighborhoods providing entertainment.

Those who enjoy craft beer can exercise their taste buds at the award-winning Oro Brewing Co., Cider Corps, 12 West Brewing, Chupacabra Taproom, B.R.I., or try a glass of wine at the [Salut Kitchen Bar](#).

Best restaurants for breakfast: T.C. Eggington's, Crackers & Co. Cafe, Broken Yolk Cafe, Cozy Corner Cafe, Sassy's Cafe & Bakery

Best restaurants for lunch and dinner: Organ Pizza Stop, Indian Oven, Red White And Brew, Osaka Japanese Steakhouse, Blue Adobe Sante Fe Grille, Bobby Q, Four Peaks Restaurant
Best bars and pubs: The Draft Sports Grill, Salut Kitchen Bar, Ohso Brewery and Distillery, Goldwater Brewing Co., Desert Eagle Brewing Company

Best Neighborhoods In Mesa

The largest suburb in America features many neighborhoods that curious visitors want to tour and get an up-close taste of the local lifestyle.

Downtown Mesa sits in the city's business epicenter, and tourists will enjoy all the amenities of a modern town, including restaurants, wineries, coffee shops, and even museums.

Tourists might also want to visit Red Mountain Ranch. Named after the community's country club, the neighborhood boasts a variety of parks and open spaces that are perfect for exploring.

Top Things To Do In Mesa

Visit the [Arizona Museum of Natural History](#)

History buffs will feel right at home at this magnificent facility in Mesa. Dedicated to the preservation and study of the state's natural history, the museum was founded in 1992 and exhibits everything from native plants and animals to its natural geology.

They also display [Native American artifacts](#) from the Hohokam people, an indigenous tribe that once occupied the area.

This is a great place to learn about the area's history through various interactive activities and have some good family fun in the museum's expansive outdoor area.

Admission: \$13(adults), \$7(3-12 years), \$10(seniors), \$8(students), free (2 years and below)

Hours: Tuesday to Saturday (10 am-5 pm) Sunday (noon-5 pm), Monday, and most holidays (closed)

Have Fun at Gofland Sunsplash

Tourists looking to spend a fun day outdoors should set a date to visit Gofland Sunsplash. This 25-acre amusement park offers unadulterated fun for kids and grown-ups, with over 30 rides and several other attractions.

For an adrenaline-filled experience, try one of the many water slides or join others in a fast car racing game.

But if tourists want to take it easy, there is an 18-hole golf

course in the facility where they can test their golf swing.

Other indulging games include go-kart racing, air hockey, bumper boats, and laser knights.

Admission: General (\$49), junior (\$46), senior (\$46)

Hours: Monday-Thursday (11 am – 10 pm), Friday & Saturday (11 am – 12 am), Sunday (11 am – 9 pm)

Go on a Culinary Adventure with the Fresh Food Trail

Food enthusiasts can enjoy the ultimate experience on this unique road trip along the Fresh Foodie Trail from the south to the east of Arizona. This private guided agritourism affair features stops at farms, wineries, and breweries in Mesa, Queen Creek, and Gilbert.

As tourists enjoy sumptuous meals prepared from locally sourced ingredients, they also get to sample drinks from the finest craft breweries and [wineries in Arizona](#).

The tour is also an excellent opportunity to take in the magnificent sights of the manicured desert landscapes while reveling in the sunny Arizona weather.

Rates: \$1200

Duration: 6 hours 30 minutes

Break a Sweat at Usery Mountain Regional Park

Ardent adventurers and lovers of open spaces should test their might at the Usery Mountain Regional Park. Stretching across 3648 acres, the park features over 30 miles of trails

with various difficulty levels that both hikers and bikers can try.

Tourists looking for something less hectic can take advantage of the numerous picnic areas, get on horseback for an easy ride, or shoot some arrows at the on-site archery range.

There are also campsites for RV camping and two mountain peaks, Wind Cave Mountain and Pass Mountain, that offer panoramic views of the surrounding areas.

Admission: \$7 per car for day use, or \$3 per person -hiking or biking into the park. Camping fees start at \$20 per night.

Hours: 5:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. daily

Best Way To Get Around Mesa

Mesa is generally an easy city to navigate thanks to a well-developed public transport system and infrastructure. Visitors have several options, including buses, trains, and taxis.

In West Mesa, the [Valley Metro Light Rail](#) takes tourists to all routes connected to Downtown Mesa.

This region has a good share of the area's attractions, including the Mesa Arts Center, restaurants, and shops.

However, the light rail journey stops at Mesa Drive, where guests must find alternative transportation to continue beyond this stop.

Hours: Operates All days of the week between 10 am and 9 pm

Fare: \$4 1-day trip, \$20 for 7 days, \$33 for 15 days, \$64 for 31 days

Another option to get from point A to B is through the city's bus system, which comprises the regular route service and Dial A Ride service.

The latter was instituted for customers unable to use the regular route service, and passengers have to call in advance to schedule the pick-up.

The Valley Metro bus route system is well-connected and links numerous routes in the city for easy navigation.

The fare is the same as in the light rail system

Furthermore, visitors can call a taxi to conveniently get around the city. These usually park outside public areas like bus stations, train stations, airports, hotels, etc.

But to be sure, tourists are advised to call a Mesa taxi agency ahead of schedule for a more convenient pickup. Fares involve a meter counter that is government regulated and remains constant across all service providers.

How To Spend The Perfect Day In Mesa

Mesa packs an impressive tourism punch thanks to its numerous attractions. Tourists will have a challenge squeezing time to tour all of them into a day's itinerary, but they can try to make the most of it.

A typical day should start with a visit to the Mesa museums, including the Mesa Arts

Museum, Arizona Museum of Natural History, and i.d.e.a Museum. The last one is an excellent place for a family outing, promising all the fun to keep the kids preoccupied.

Tourists can head to the many exciting spots in the area for brunch. What's Crackin Café offers an upbeat dining experience featuring healthy meals prepared with fresh and garden-sourced ingredients.

The afternoons are best spent in the open spaces doing different adventurous activities. Guests can choose between a thrilling hike on Wind Cave Trail at **Usery Mountain Regional Park** or a boat tour exploring the Saguaro [lakeside paradise](#) and all its exotic wildlife.

When the sun starts to set, tourists can wind up the day by discovering the breweries and wineries in Downtown Mesa.

Numerous watering holes in the area provide a perspective of the local drinking culture while entertaining first-timers with freshly brewed drinks.

FAQ

Q: Is Mesa a Nice Town to Live in?

Mesa has been termed as one of the best areas to reside in Arizona. The city offers a charming suburban feel with peaceful communities that own their homes. The neighborhoods also boast public amenities like parks, restaurants, coffee shops, and some of the [most incredible places worth visiting in Arizona](#).

Q: Does Mesa have Scorpions? Being in Arizona, scorpions are an expected phenomenon in

Mesa, and the Arizona Bark Scorpion is the most common species. Unfortunately, the scorpion poses a danger to people and can climb walls and trees, enhancing the possibility of human encounters.

Q: Is Mesa Cooler than Phoenix? Arizona is famous for having some of [the hottest cities in the country](#). This is true for Mesa, located in the “Valley of the Sun”, and receives a lot of sunny days in a year. The heat lingers in Mesa longer than in Phoenix, making it the hotter of the two.

KB Home Announces The Grand Opening of Cordillera, A New-Home Community in Gilbert, Arizona

Homebuilder offers new, personalized homes in a desirable location, affordably priced from the low \$500,000s. January 06, 2023 04:30 PM Eastern Standard Time Business Wire



KB Home announces the grand opening of Cordillera, a new-home community in Gilbert, Arizona. (Photo: Business Wire)

PHOENIX--(BUSINESS WIRE)--KB Home (NYSE: KBH) today announced the grand opening of Cordillera, a new

community of single-family homes in popular Gilbert, Arizona. The community is situated on East Riggs Road, just west of Higley Road near Loop 202 and Highway 101.

Cordillera is zoned for the highly ranked Chandler Unified School District and just minutes away from Patterson Elementary School, Payne Junior High School and Basha High School. The new community is also close to shopping, dining and entertainment in Gilbert’s vibrant Heritage District and minutes to Gilbert Regional Park, which hosts a popular fishing lake, large splash pad, modern playground and volleyball, pickleball and tennis courts. Homeowners will appreciate the proximity to **San Tan Mountain Regional Park**, which features 10,000 acres of pristine desert hiking, horseback riding and mountain biking trails.

“As with other KB Home communities, Cordillera provides home shoppers with the opportunity to purchase a new KB home that can be personalized to reflect their lifestyle and needs.”

The new homes at Cordillera showcase desirable design characteristics like spacious kitchens overlooking large great rooms and expansive bedroom suites with walk-in closets. The community’s floor plans feature up to six

bedrooms and five baths, and range in size from approximately 1,600 to 3,600 square feet. Future amenities include a children’s playground, picnic area, bocce ball court, ramada, barbeques and horseshoe pits.

“Our Cordillera community is situated in popular Gilbert, Arizona and convenient to highly rated schools as well as popular shopping, dining, entertainment and outdoor recreation. Future amenities will include a children’s playground, picnic area, bocce ball court, ramada, barbeques and horseshoe pits,” said Kevin McAndrews, President of KB Home’s Phoenix division. “As with other KB Home communities, Cordillera provides home shoppers with the opportunity to purchase a new KB home that can be personalized to reflect their lifestyle and needs.”

KB Home stands out from other homebuilders as the company gives homebuyers exceptional choice and control. KB Home starts by offering a wide variety of homes at an affordable price. From there, the builder gives buyers the ability to personalize their homes, from floor plans to exterior styles to design choices to where they live in the community. The KB Home team works hand in hand with homeowners every step

of the way, so they have a real partner in the process. Every KB home is designed to be ENERGY STAR® certified thanks to the quality construction techniques and materials utilized that ultimately deliver significant savings on utility bills compared to used homes. Additionally, all new KB homes are designed to deliver an enhanced indoor environment and include high performance ventilation systems, low- or zero-VOC products and other features guided by the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Indoor airPLUS standards.

The Cordillera sales office and model homes are open for walk-in visits and private in-person tours by appointment. Homebuyers also have the flexibility to arrange a live video tour with a sales counselor. Pricing begins from the low \$500,000s.

For more information on KB Home, call 888-KB-HOMES or visit kbhome.com.