



Saguaro cacti stand like tall sentinels over tees and greens



# Tucson

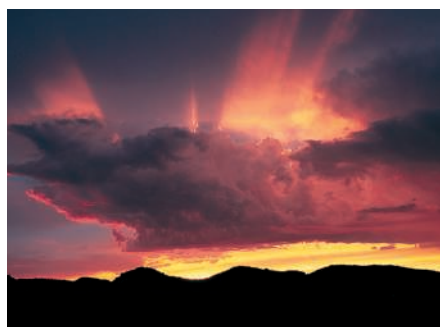
History, nature and golf all share star billing in Tucson, making it a great escape for a few days on and off the fairways

**K**nown affectionately as “Old Pueblo”, the one-time capital of Arizona is its second-largest city. It offers all the trappings and amenities of a big conurbation but with a small-town feel and a cultural diversity displaying its Native American, Spanish, Mexican and Old West heritage.

Golf may be a relative newcomer, but it has made its mark. The 40 courses in Tucson and Southern Arizona offer everything from city-centre municipal parkland tracks to target golf in desert valleys and canyons. Several courses sit among nearby mountain ranges. Elevations are higher than central Arizona, so summers are more temperate. These are true high-desert courses, where saguaro cacti stand like tall sentinels over tees and greens. Wildlife, notably bird species such as hummingbirds, is prolific in the region.

Rounds cost less than \$20 on courses including Tucson's five municipal facilities from as early as April through until September or October. Even the most expensive courses max out at \$90 in summer, and you typically pay no more than \$45-\$65 for 18 holes then.

Among Tucson's stars are



You can see why this is observatory country

Robert Trent Jones Jr's spectacular 6,785-yard Arizona National Golf Club course, which snakes across the arid, rocky Santa Anna foothills among forests of giant saguaro. Rated one of Arizona's top courses, the views from the lofty 18th fairway stretch to Mexico.

Tom Fazio's Mountain and Canyon 18-hole twins at The Lodge at Ventana Canyon are just as highly regarded, the more-elevated Mountain's par-3 3rd a breathtaking 107-yard challenge where golfers take aim on a tee box atop a craggy outcrop and fire through a ravine down to a

green cupped by saguaro-studded slopes. A Kodak moment if ever there was one.

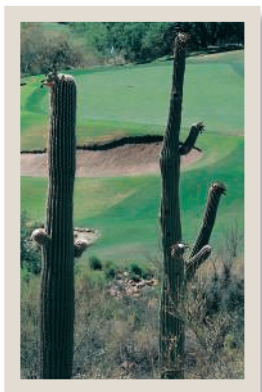
Ventana is part of a plush spa resort, as is La Paloma Country Club, which has 27 holes of Jack Nicklaus target golf and fast greens.

The Omni Tucson National Golf Resort & Spa's immaculate parkland fairways and greens stage the PGA Tour's annual Chrysler Classic, formerly the Tucson Open, on two of its three nines – Orange and Gold. The par-5 15th, Gold's hole 6, is a long-hitter's delight at 622 yards from the back. But beware the 10 ponds and 188 bunkers.

Former TPC club Starr Pass Country Club has just expanded to give 27 Arnold Palmer holes on three nines – Coyote, Roadrunner and Rattler. Coyote's 6th is the signature hole and stands on the trail carved through the rugged Tucson Mountains by explorer Richard Starr over 120 years ago. Visitors today have the more comfortable option of staying in the next-door JW Marriott resort.

High on the Santa Catalina flanks, the Hilton Tucson El Conquistador Golf & Tennis Resort has two contrasting 18-hole courses and an on-resort nine holes, plus 31 floodlit tennis courts and a spa.

Images of a rattlesnake are among ancient petroglyph carvings by the 5th hole of Tom Weiskopf's course at The Golf Club at Vistoso. It could be an omen for several holes where golfers can play safe or go for glory, especially the intimidating par-3 17th. It definitely bites where it hurts.



## Tucson Facts

### WHERE IS IT

Tucson is 115 miles south-east of Phoenix. Both are on Interstate 10, which runs between California and Florida. The Mexican border is an hour's drive south. Tucson International Airport is served by numerous airlines with non-stop services to destinations throughout the US including a number of transatlantic gateways. The city is also on Amtrak's 'Sunset Limited' Orlando-Los Angeles and 'Texas Eagle' Chicago-Los Angeles rail routes.

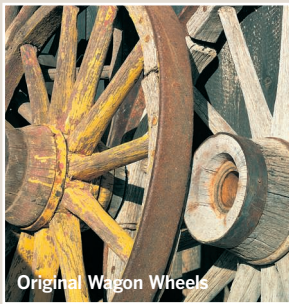
**Information:** [visittucson.org](http://visittucson.org), [tucsongolf.com](http://tucsongolf.com); 020-8741-7256.

### KEY ATTRACTIONS

■ Tucson's Spanish heritage is highlighted by the painted adobe homes in areas such as the **Tucson Museum of Art's Historic Block** in downtown and the 18th Century Mission San Xavier del Bac, nicknamed the "White Dove of the Desert" and still used for church services. It is often called America's Sistine Chapel.

■ **Tombstone**, 70 miles from Tucson, was the setting for the infamous gunfight at the OK Corral. Today, visitors can stroll along its rustic boardwalks, down a shot of red-eye in an authentic saloon, see its courthouse and Boothill Cemetery and watch a re-enactment.

■ A marker close to route 80, east of Tucson, commemorates the surrender of Chiricahua Apache chief **Geronimo** and his band of renegades in 1886, finally ending the Indian Wars of the



Original Wagon Wheels

South West.

■ The Arizona State Museum is the South West's oldest and largest anthropology museum and has 20,000 Indian ceramic vessels. The Tucson Museum of Art is renowned for its pre-Columbian artefacts and Western art collection, while original **Ansel Adams** prints are on show at the museum founded by the legendary photographer – the University of Arizona's Center for Creative Photography

### FAMILY ACTIVITIES

■ Many Western movies and TV shows have been filmed at **Old Tucson Studios**, a theme park which re-creates an untamed 1880s town complete with gunslinger shoot-outs and stunt shows.

■ Former mining town **Bisbee** was once the largest city between San Francisco and St Louis. Visitors go to see its elegant Victorian buildings, which house shops, galleries, hotels and B&Bs, and kids love taking a train tour deep into its old copper mine.

■ There are lots of highs and lows which will appeal to the whole family. Mountain-top observatories including Kitt Peak, Steward and Whipple show visitors the marvels of the heavens,

while they can venture underground to see spectacular caves including the Big Room at **Kartchner Caverns**.

■ **The Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum**, in the heart of the Sonoran Desert, gives visitors a close-up view of more than 1,300 types of plants and 300 kinds of animals resident in the desert. **Biosphere 2**, 20 minutes north of Tucson, is the world-famous glass-enclosed "mini-world" experimental lab where you can now take guided tours.

### TUCSON AND SOUTHERN ARIZONA FACTS

■ Southern Arizona attracts the largest number of hummingbird species in the world. The town of **Sierra Vista**, 70 miles from Tucson, is known as the "Hummingbird Capital of the US" for the numbers which flock to rugged canyons near the town each summer.

■ **Mt Lemmon**, north-east of Tucson in the Santa Catalina Mountains, is the southernmost ski resort in the US.

■ **Tucson** is the oldest continually-inhabited settlement in the US. Remnants of the Hohokam Indian civilisation found in Tucson date back to the 1st Century.

■ Tucson's collection of spa resorts now includes the world's first catering exclusively to the gay and lesbian market. **Coyote Moon Health Resort Spa** is on a historic ranch in the Tucson Mountains which was once a stagecoach stop.

■ **The Tohono O'odham Nation**, covering 2.8 million acres, is the second-largest Native American reservation in the US and encompasses Mission San Xavier del Bac and Kitt Peak National Observatory.

### WHERE TO PLAY

**Arizona National Golf Club**  
6,785 yards, par 71  
\$55-\$165, cart fee \$30  
**Contact:** 00-1-520-749-3636  
[arizonanationalgolfclub.com](http://arizonanationalgolfclub.com)  
*Cactus forests, mountainside fairways, canyons and rocks all make for a prickly test*

**Hilton Tucson El Conquistador Golf & Tennis Resort**  
Canada Course: 6,713 yards, par 72  
Conquistador Course: 6,801, par 71  
\$40-\$115  
**Contact:** 00-1-520-544-1800  
[hiltonelconquistador.com](http://hiltonelconquistador.com)  
*Recently restored Conquistador is a much tougher beast to conquer*

**The Lodge at Ventana Canyon**  
The Canyon Course: 6,907 yards, par 72  
The Mountain Course: 6,907 yards, par 72  
\$79-\$199  
**Contact:** 00-1-520-577-1400  
[thelodgeatventana.com](http://thelodgeatventana.com)  
*Tom Fazio resort duo with plenty of trees and rocks to catch wayward shots*

**Omni Tucson National Golf Resort**  
3 nines, 6,609-7,148 yards, par 71/73  
\$65-\$175  
**Contact:** 00-1-520-297-2271  
[tucsonnational.com](http://tucsonnational.com)  
*Ten lakes and a tough finish make this Omni potent*

**Westin La Paloma Country Club**  
3 nines, 6,997-7,088 yards, par 72  
\$90-\$195, includes cart  
**Contact:** 00-1-520-299-1500  
[westinlapalomaresort.com](http://westinlapalomaresort.com)  
*Early Jack Nicklaus design with lightning-fast greens*

### WHERE TO STAY

**Hilton Tucson El Conquistador Golf & Tennis Resort**  
**Contact:** 00-1-520-544-5000  
[hiltonelconquistador.com](http://hiltonelconquistador.com)

**Loews Ventana Canyon Resort**  
**Contact:** 00-1-520-299-2020  
[Loewshotels.com](http://Loewshotels.com)

**The Westin La Paloma Resort & Spa**  
**Contact:** 00-1-520-742-6000  
[westinlapalomaresort.com](http://westinlapalomaresort.com)



Despite high-quality courses, green fees are reasonable in the region