



### **A Roundup of What’s New in AZ**

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### **Arizona COVID-19 Update**

**Please note:** For visitor guidance due to COVID-19 such as mask-wearing, a list of tourism-related reopening or closures, and a link to public health guidelines, click here: <https://www.visitarizona.com/covid-19/> . Some attractions are open year-round and some are open seasonally or move to seasonal hours. To ensure the places you want to see are open on your travel dates, please check their website for hours of operation.

### **Resorts, Hotels & Spas**

#### ***Greater Phoenix and Central Arizona***

#### **Hyatt Regency Scottsdale Resort & Spa announces the new Desert Garden coming Fall 2021**

The beauty of the Arizona landscape is the inspiration for the newest outdoor venue at [Hyatt Regency Scottsdale Resort and Spa](#)—the Desert Garden. The space, located in a serene courtyard and surrounded by a grove of mesquite trees, weaves together natural textures, materials, landscape and design to create an oasis in the desert. The entrance is over a bridge of planked concrete pavers, traversing above a shallow reflecting pool. A blue palo verde tree anchors the space, separating a 1,600 sq. ft. lawn from the 3,700 sq. ft. patio area. A cascading waterfall wall creates a tranquil focal point for a dinner event or social function. The landscaping surrounding the Desert Garden speaks to the destination and includes mesquite and ironwood trees for shade in addition to shrubs, cactus and succulents such as aloe, agave, saguaro, ocotillo and organ pipe cactus. Grasses and seasonal flowers will create a beautiful backdrop.

#### **Sam Fox, leading restaurateur, announces The Global Ambassador Hotel**

One of the industry’s leading restaurateurs and premier hospitality brand developers, Sam Fox, is making his official foray into the luxury hospitality industry with the announcement of his internationally inspired hotel, [The Global Ambassador](#). The Global Ambassador will combine impressive hospitality, culinary and wellness experiences. The 141-room luxury hotel has been designed by Fox himself who will own, operate, manage and co-develop the hotel under his newly formed Author & Edit Hospitality company along with his trusted collaborator, business partner and friend Brian Frakes of Common Bond Development Group, a company known for its notable lifestyle development projects. Fox’s stellar lineup of inventive culinary offerings will define The Global Ambassador. The hotel will boast five original dining venues with cuisine influenced by the Mediterranean region including Greece, Italy and Morocco. Most notably within the hotel will be the largest rooftop restaurant in the state, at 18,000 square feet, that overlooks the iconic Camelback Mountain. The Wellness Center will offer an expansive fitness level and ultra-luxe spa.

#### **Arizona Biltmore completes year-long renovations**

The [Arizona Biltmore, a Waldorf Astoria Resort](#) in Phoenix, reopens after a year-long renovation process, costing over \$70 million. The historically famous hotel is best known for its Frank Lloyd architectural designs and accommodating

celebrities and past presidents. The renovations include the redesign of the 11 guest cottages, the on-site pools, and the Tierra Luna Spa. The Saguaro Pool, the new adults-only pool, features new cabanas furnished with TVs and mini fridges. The family friendly Paradise Pool added a new 65 foot triple slide waterslide, called The Twist, and 15 new cabanas. As part of the renovation, the resort added two new food and beverage concepts to the property. The Spire Bar, the new outdoor bar blends water and fire features, offering live music under the stars. Renata's Hearth is the resort's new restaurant serving contemporary Latin cuisine celebrating smoking and grilling traditions to create complex flavors paired with specialty tequila and mezcals.

### **Downtown Tempe announces new hotel**

The newly opened (summer 2021) [Westin Tempe](#) features 290 spacious guest rooms and suites. The new hotel offers all-day dining venues, Terra Tempe Kitchen & Spirits and Skysill Rooftop Lounge. Terra Tempe features a Southwestern cuisine, utilizing local ingredients and flavors in signature dishes. For views of Downtown Tempe, "A" Mountain and the surrounding valley, guests can take the lift to the hotel's iconic Skysill Rooftop Lounge. The Lounge features premium cocktails, a curated wine list and fresh dishes. The hotel will also be home to Cup of Joe Market Café, offering cafe beverage and meals on the go. Located in the center of Downtown Tempe, the hotel is steps away from hundreds of restaurants, bars, and stores along the historic Mill Avenue.

### **New We-Ko-Pa Casino and Resort at Fort McDowell**

On October 29, 2020, the new [We-Ko-Pa Casino Resort](#) opened its doors in Fort McDowell. In addition to offering a full complement of slot machines, tables, bingo and gaming amenities, the new casino features a wide variety of dining establishments, event venues, Native American design elements and other attributes designed to maximize the comfort, safety and enjoyment of all who visit the casino and stay at the adjacent AAA Four Diamond hotel. The first-class We-Ko-Pa Casino Resort is connected to a new four-story covered parking structure and the existing 246-room hotel. The casino shares its name with the upscale We-Ko-Pa Golf Club across the street that boasts the consistently award-winning Saguaro and Cholla courses.

Company/organization [response to COVID-19](#).

### **New hotel in Downtown Phoenix**

[AC Hotel Phoenix Downtown](#), located at the [Arizona Center](#) offers 199 rooms, 5,000 sq. ft of meeting space, two media salons and a board room with indoor and outdoor accommodations. AC Lounge, the lounge and lobby bar, features craft cocktails, tapas, an outdoor patio and cozy fireplaces. The boutique hotel boasts a 24-hour fitness center with panoramic views, library, business center, hydration stations and AC Store. Guest rooms include complimentary WiFi, smart TVs and premium toiletries including lavender satchels in each room. The AC Kitchen offers European-inspired continental breakfast which includes imported meats, cheeses, fresh fruits, yogurt parfaits and more.

### **Phoenix's largest hotel property unveils complete renovation**

[Sheraton Phoenix Downtown](#), Arizona's largest hotel located in the heart of downtown, has opened its doors after a multi-phase renovation. The hotel is one of the first to display Sheraton's new signature key elements, with a new, contemporary design, public spaces and refreshed programming. At the heart of Sheraton Phoenix Downtown is the 19,000 square foot lobby that acts as a public square for the hotel. Anchoring the lobby is the brand's signature "Community Table" an inviting workspace designed with amenities to keep guests productive, including built-in lighting, outlets and wireless charging stations. The lobby also features soundproof booths and six "Studios" available for booking through on-demand, contactless booking system. &More, Sheraton Phoenix Downtown's part bar, part coffee shop, and part grab-and-go market, is located in the lobby area and open from 6:00 a.m. to 1:00 a.m. The 1,004 guest rooms are equipped with new tools for productivity, such as a height-adjustable work table, integrated power and charging and layered lighting. Sheraton Fitness underwent an \$850,000 makeover, with state-of-the-art equipment and on-demand fitness classes.

### **First Dark Sky Zone Resort opens in Scottsdale**

[ADERO](#), opened on Oct. 1, 2020, is Scottsdale's only Dark Sky Zone resort with a modern guest experience inspired by the surrounding Sonoran Desert. The summits of the Four Peaks wilderness frame the view from the resort. The six-

story, newly developed resort offers 177-rooms including 16 oversized suites, outfitted with the latest technology, and expansive balconies. The majority of accommodations take in the panoramic mountain vistas. The resort also maintains an exclusive sustainability trail with indigenous flora. ADERO's Adventure Concierge offers hiking excursions to nearby trails, direct access to golf offerings in partnership with [SunRidge Canyon Golf Club](#), biking excursions led by [McDowell Mountain Cycles](#) and telescope tours of the galaxy led by official 'Dark Sky Zone' guides. ADERO features a boutique spa, two heated pools and sundecks, and a 5,000 square-foot wellness studio. The wellness studio offers daily classes, such as yoga, stretch, sculpt and Pilates, as well as an indoor cycling studio with Peloton bikes.

### **JW Marriott Scottsdale Camelback Inn Resort & Spa new Work From Home Package**

[JW Marriott Scottsdale Camelback Inn Resort & Spa](#) in Scottsdale announced new Work From Home Package, [Distanced in the Desert](#). Offering guests work-from-home flexibility and e-learning in a tucked-away office or study space in a private, casita-style room with your own HVAC system, mobile key for contactless entry, and a \$100 resort credit to be used at the resort's restaurants currently open, The Spa, or Camelback Golf Club.

### **New hotel in Uptown Phoenix**

[ARRIVE Phoenix](#), the \$25 million boutique hotel spanning two restored mid-century modern towers is now open. The property has 79 hotel rooms, featuring king beds, bath products, custom vanities and wardrobes, concrete sinks, and mid-century-inspired fireplaces in select rooms. A record collection curated by local institution Stinkweeds is available for guests to cue up on their in-room record player. ARRIVE's registration desk/popsicle stand, called The Pop Stand, offers hotel guests complimentary handcrafted paletas-style popsicles while completing their check-in process. The popsicle menu is ever-changing, made from fresh fruit, luxurious cream or booze, such as strawberries con crema, chile mango, pink lemonade, and frozen margarita. The hotel has an onsite coffee shop, featuring [Cartel Coffee Lab](#). Cartel Uptown Phoenix, housed in a 600 square-foot space, offers fresh baked goods and grab-and-go meals, Cartel Uptown Phoenix offers their full coffee program, complete with single origin beans, canned cold brew, plus the classic six-ounce cappuccino. Lylo Swim Club, pronounced lie-low, is the hotel's mid-century style poolside bar led by Ross Simon of Great Minds Drink Alike, known best for his globally-awarded cocktail bars [Bitter & Twisted Cocktail Parlor](#) and [Little Rituals](#).

### **Canopy by Hilton opens in Old Town Scottsdale**

Designed as a natural extension of the surrounding arts district, [Canopy by Hilton Scottsdale Old Town](#), the new 177-room hotel at the northeast corner of First Street and Marshall Way, boasts spacious guestrooms and suites and features approximately 2,000 square-feet of meeting space. Cobre Kitchen + Cocktails, the hotel's signature restaurant, is an American brasserie inspired by the Southwest and features small and shareable plates highlighting local flavors. Within the bar is a grab-n-go counter offering locally roasted coffee and artisanal breakfast treats and pastries. Outrider Rooftop Lounge, Old Town's newest rooftop pool and bar perched atop the hotel's seventh floor, focuses on delivering locally inspired dishes and cocktails. Offering 180-degree panoramas of the surrounding vistas, guests can enjoy casual seating, private cabanas, a roaring fire pit, and social spaces. Canopy by Hilton Scottsdale Old Town's [response to COVID-19](#).

### **New Hilton hotel opens in Tempe**

Arizona's first [Canopy by Hilton hotel](#) opens in the heart of downtown Tempe. [Canopy by Hilton Tempe Downtown](#), offers a local experience with a boutique feel, bringing 198 spacious guest rooms and suites, along with approximately 5,000 square feet of meeting and event space. The hotel features the East Valley's only full-service rooftop pool and bar on the 14th floor, providing a scenic venue for gathering, tapas-style light bites and a curated local cocktail menu, as well as a signature restaurant on the ground floor. Centrally located, the hotel is about five miles from the [Phoenix Sky Harbor International Airport](#) and steps away from some of the area's finest shopping centers, culinary offerings, entertainment destinations such as Desert Financial Arena and local landmarks including Tempe Town Lake, Mill Avenue District and Tempe Beach Park. Canopy by Hilton Tempe Downtown [response to COVID-19](#).

### **The Ritz-Carlton, Paradise Valley is expected to open in late 2021**

Construction is continuing on [The Ritz-Carlton, Paradise Valley](#); the 20 acre, luxury property expected to open in late 2021. The lobby, situated above the rest of the hotel and overlooking [Camelback Mountain](#), will display a water feature that cascades down through the property to a world-class spa. The resort's 215 guest rooms consists of regular suites, oversized suites, detached casitas and bungalows. Guest accommodations will be connected by lush courtyard gardens and shaded walkways. The main pool, spanning nearly 400 feet, will be one of the longest resort pools in North America. A specialty dining concept will harvest seasonal produce from the resort's herb garden and 400-tree citrus orchard. The 16,000 square-foot spa is comprised of indoor and outdoor treatment rooms, a private pool, whirlpool, Vichy shower and cabanas. The resort will also feature a 2,500 square-foot health and fitness center, various indoor and outdoor meeting and event spaces, and a grand lawn with views of Camelback, Mummy and McDowell mountains.

### ***Northern Arizona***

#### **Unique resort opening near the south rim of the Grand Canyon National Park**

[Clear Sky Resorts](#) announces the grand opening of Arizona's first luxury sky dome resort near the Grand Canyon National Park in 2021. Located 20 minutes south of the South Rim entrance, in Valle, and 30 miles north of Williams. Clear Sky Resort consists of 45 geodesic individually climate controlled luxury sky domes that include plush bathrobes, slippers, upscale linens, swinging chair, deck hammocks, panoramic window, skylight with telescope for stargazing, modern bathroom with rain shower, and eco-friendly fireplaces in some domes. The sky domes allow you to take in the high desert landscape with spectacular sunsets and sunrises. Nighttime stargazing is really when the domes shine! Other amenities include a daily happy hour in the Welcome Dome, onsite breakfast and dinner options, nightly s'mores next to artisan crafted firepits, a lit frisbee golf course, movie nights, live music, astronomy nights, storytelling, lit sculpture night walks, and an out-of-this-world Projection Dome with 360 degree star movie watching.

#### **Hyatt Place Page / Lake Powell Adventure Packages to explore Page**

[Hyatt Place Page/Lake Powell](#) launched new adventure-focused packages in partnership with local tour operators, [Big Orange Jeep Tours](#) and [Epic Adventure Rides](#), to offer guests exciting excursions among the natural wonders of the region, in addition to Horseshoe Bend and Antelope Canyon. All packages are available to book until the end of 2021. Starting at \$210 per night, the "[Hyatt Stay & Paddleboard Package](#)" includes a paddleboard excursion for two hosted by Big Orange Jeep Tours. Equipment including life jackets and I-Rocker inflatable, stand-up paddleboards provided. Rental accessories can be picked up and dropped off at Big Orange Jeep Tours, located 0.4 miles from the hotel. The "[Hyatt Stay & Epic Adventure Package](#)", starting at \$310 per night, offers a Canyon and Cliffs UTV Tour hosted by Epic Adventure Rides. The tour takes guests across the desert trails, sandy washes, sand dunes and red rock sandstone of the Grand Stair Escalante National Monument. There are two tour options available, a two-hour Self-Driven Tour with a max of four guests, rates from \$400 a night and a two hour Guide-Driven Tour with a max of three guests, rates from \$350 a night. Starting at \$150 a night, the "[Hyatt Stay & Off the Beaten Path Package](#)" comes with a map guide to explore the city of Page and a picnic lunch for two packed with sandwiches, fruit, chips, granola bars and water. The map guide features some of the city's best hiking trails and hidden gems.

### ***North Central Arizona***

#### **Sedona resort launches adventure-focused package**

[Amara Resort and Spa](#) in Sedona launched the "[Sedona Adventure Package](#)" starting from \$259 per night. The package offers a guest room, daily fresh squeezed juice or smoothie per guest, a seven-day Red Rock Pass to explore trails in Sedona, a book of Sedona's best hikes, and a souvenir Amara collapsible cooler bag packed with a picnic lunch for each guest from the onsite restaurant, [SaltRock](#). The "Sedona Adventure" package is available to book through December 28, 2021. A two-night minimum stay is required. The offer is not commissionable and cannot be combined with any other offers or promotions.

### **Mii Amo Spa Resort announces renovations and expansion**

[Mii Amo Spa Resort](#), the award-winning destination spa located in Boynton Canyon, Sedona, plans for an extensive renovation and expansion. The last guests departed on January 3, 2021 and a revitalized Mii amo will be unveiled in the spring of 2022. Upon reopening, Mii amo will debut a collection of elevated experiences, including some designed to foster a deeper connection to the Native American and energetic perspectives of the region. A new indoor-outdoor restaurant will offer innovative culinary and nutrition programming. In addition to renovating the existing 16 casita rooms, new casita rooms and suites will be added. The casitas are arranged around private courtyards that create an intimate spa experience.

### **Ambiente, North America's first landscape hotel coming to Sedona**

North America's first landscape hotel is set to open in fall 2021 in Sedona. [Ambiente, a landscape hotel](#) is uniquely designed to blend in with the surrounding geological setting and gives guests the opportunity to experience and embrace the natural beauty that surrounds them. The Landscape Hotel is comprised of 40 cube-shaped, guest Atriums that are elevated above the ground by steel piers and constructed using floor-to-ceiling, bronze-tinted glass and matte-charcoal and rusted metal. Ambiente is designed and built with a deep respect for the environment with a focus on sustainable methods and organic, modern architecture that complements the surrounding topography and minimizes the impact on the land. The property is owned and managed by the Sedona family-owned company, Two Sister Bosses.

### **Ambiente announces award winning head chef**

[Ambiente, a Landscape Hotel](#) in Sedona, opening fall 2021, announced that it has tapped renowned chef Lisa Dahl to lead the vision for the hotel's culinary offering. [Alchemy](#) will be Ambiente's signature restaurant within a custom Airstream, which has been transformed and reimaged into a culinary destination situated poolside at the heart of the three-acre property. Alchemy is exclusive to hotel guests only and will serve breakfast and lunch daily with limited after-hours offerings. Dahl's creativity will run wild in her bold, yet approachable take on healthy, indulgent cuisine. Standouts of the menu are likely to include A Bird in the Nest, spicy sofrita quinoa with a fried farm egg center; Teriyaki Roasted Beet Burger with herbed, blistered goat cheese; Ahi Tuna Poke Soft Tacos with avocado-wasabi crema; Quesadilla Supremo filled with grilled rosemary chicken, roasted tomato, spicy jack cheese, and chevre; Lentil Walnut Fritters with cilantro mint pesto and a variety of Dahl's signature soups and salads.

### **Work From Here, Learn From Here package at Amara Resort and Spa**

[Amara Resort and Spa](#) in Sedona introduces the program, [Work From Here, Learn From Here](#). The new program is included within the resort fee and provides guests with an ideal space for a workation. The 750 square-foot-space is set up like a private classroom or office and is complete with classroom-style seating, whiteboards, a speakerphone, a printing station, shelves stocked with school supplies and a screen or projector is available upon request. Guests also have access to an on-call executive assistant or teacher's aide who can assist with day-to-day tasks like sending faxes, shipping assignments and setting up audio and video connections while on-site tutors or nannies can be reserved two weeks in advance for \$50 per hour. Amara has also tapped locally-owned concierge service [RemoteWell](#), to curate on and off-site experiences for guests looking to prioritize their health and wellness while working remotely. Daily rates start at \$188, the resort fee is \$33 plus tax and also includes valet parking, Wi-Fi, and unlimited local and toll-free calls.

## ***Southern Arizona***

### **The expansion at Hacienda Del Sol Guest Ranch in Tucson is complete**

[Hacienda Del Sol Guest Ranch Resort](#), a Forbes Four-Star Resort in Tucson, Ariz., is pleased to announce their expansion project has been completed. The expansion added forty new guestrooms modeled after the Catalina Rooms added in 2015. The guest rooms span seven new buildings facing both the Santa Catalina Mountains and Rincon Mountains offering guests expansive mountain views. The new Rincon Ridge Rooms include fifteen rooms with the private outdoor showers guests have come to associate with the signature Catalina Rooms. Care has been

taken to weave in elements of the resort's unique history throughout the new guestrooms and other areas. In addition to the new guestrooms, Hacienda Del Sol also added a brand-new pool area with a forty-foot lap pool, an infinity-edge wading pool, spa and a large sun deck. A 420 square-foot fitness facility with large roll up doors take advantage of Tucson's months of mild temperatures and unforgettable mountain views. The expansion has opened up more space for displaying local art and sculpture allowing Hacienda Del Sol to continue passionately supporting artists throughout the community.

### **New boutique hotel and wine cellar coming to downtown Tucson**

[The Citizen Hotel](#), a 10-room boutique hotel and wine cellar and tasting room, is coming to downtown Tucson in 2021. The hotel resides in the historic Citizen Building, built in 1913 as The Tucson Citizen Newspaper. The hotel is a collaboration between Sarah Fox, co-owner and co-founder of Arizona winery Sand-Reckoner Wines and developer Moniqua Lane, owner of The Downtown Clifton Hotel in Tucson. Sand-Reckoner Wines will cellar, blend and bottle over 140 barrels of wine in the 5,000 square foot cellar in the basement of the hotel. The space will feature volcanic rock walls, natural lighting from glass block windows at street grade, and a ceiling that is exposed to reveal the original fir floor joists for the building above. Hotel guests and members of the public are welcome to enjoy tastings of Sand-Reckoner's wines as well as experience special events like barrel and library tastings and catered wine dinners. The cellar will also serve as an intimate event venue.

### **Historic hotel in downtown Clifton opens after extensive renovations**

[The Clifton Hotel](#), located in Clifton, Arizona, was built in 1890. The hotel was used for a variety of purposes, including office space for businesses, a home for children in transition, and it was even a private residence for a time. It eventually became an apartment building in the late 1960s, but closed its doors in the mid 1970s. Over 40 years after the building was abandoned, new owners Matt and Karen Frye restored the hotel and kept the authentic feel with 14-foot ceilings, turn-of-the-century wallpaper, and antique furniture and light fixtures. The renovations include: three studio rooms with bath and kitchenette, two suites with clawfoot tubs, a new courtyard, onsite bar, and a common area. The bar, which is reminiscent of a western tavern, has an ornate bar-back that was built in 1904 in Silver City, New Mexico. There is also a commercial kitchen and a cook who creates both traditional and signature meals and desserts.

### **The Tuxon, a modern boutique hotel in Tucson**

A modern boutique hotel located in the heart of Tucson, [The Tuxon](#) has 112 guestrooms, a pool with cabanas, a bike shed, a fitness center, and an onsite restaurant and bar. The rooms are designed with rustic wood fixtures, leather, potted succulents, and artwork that resembles the desert. The restaurant's menu, curated by Jess Keene and Drew Record offers fondue, crudités, marinated veggies, puffy pastries, chips and dips, all driven by market fresh seasonality-- and full of Southwestern flair.

## **Arizona Attractions**

### ***Greater Phoenix and Central Arizona***

#### **New Tempe public art and landmark sign unveiled**

The Tempe Tourism Office and [Downtown Tempe Authority \(DTA\)](#) partnered together to create a new public artwork in downtown: large letters that spell out TEMPE. This new Tempe landmark and work of art, titled Our Tempe, is located at Mill Avenue and Rio Salado Parkway, next to the historic Hayden House. Inspired by similar signs in other cities, Our Tempe is intended to be a destination for visitors and residents alike and a popular photo spot. Kyllan Maney, a local artist and educator, painted a colorful design on the letters, symbolizing people from all walks of life converging in Tempe.

### **Mavrix entertainment center opening soon in Scottsdale**

Located at the [Pavilions at Talking Stick](#) in Scottsdale, [Mavrix Entertainment Center](#) will be the latest addition to [Octane Raceway](#), Arizona's go-kart racing facility, and [Velocity V R](#), the state's only free-roam virtual reality gaming arena. The new 50,000 square-foot entertainment center will feature 24 lanes of bowling, 85 arcade games, state-of-the-art laser tag, billiards tables, dozens of 4K resolution televisions, 1,500 square feet of meeting and event space, a 5,000 square-foot bar/restaurant featuring chef-prepared menu items and a large outdoor games patio. Mavrix and Octane Raceway combined will total 110,000 square feet with shared access through the outdoor patio. Guests will be able to walk between the two venues and use shared arcade game cards at both Mavrix and Octane Raceway.

### **Arizona's first Versace store opening at Scottsdale Fashion Square**

[Versace](#), one of the leading global fashion design houses, will open its first Arizona store at [Scottsdale Fashion Square](#). Located in the property's elevated luxury wing, the new 3,000 square foot Versace is set to open adjacent to Michael Kors in spring 2020. Versace is the latest luxury brand to choose Scottsdale Fashion Square. Other marquee names at the shopping center include St. Laurent, Louis Vuitton, Gucci, Cartier, Prada, Jimmy Choo, Burberry and many others.

### ***Northern Central***

#### **New tasting room opens in Old Town Cottonwood**

Old Town Cottonwood's newest tasting room, [Provisioner Wines & General Store](#) is now open on the Verde Valley Wine Trail. During the frontier days, the General Store was used as a social hub and lifeline for the pioneers that settled the American Southwest. Representing the soul of Arizona in the spirit of the old-time General Store, Provisioner Wines are "Wine for the People!" The tasting room is open Monday through Thursday from 11:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. and Friday through Saturday from 11:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.

### ***Southern***

#### **Benson has new attractions for railfans**

Railfans have another reason to visit Benson. An Advanced Train Control System (ATCS) has been installed in the [Benson Visitor Center](#). It shows the location of all trains between Tucson and El Paso. A Railroad Online Audio Stream was also installed with the same computer so that visitors can now listen to the Union Pacific engineers as they communicate with the Dispatch Center in Tucson. The Visitor Center has had a G Scale model train display circling the Visitors Center, but with a generous donation in 2020, a second layer of tracks was recently built above the original layout. The display went from 90 feet of track to 230 feet of track. A turntable (Roundhouse) is also being added. The Visitor Center built an AAR Control stand to operate the trains. An AAR Control stand is what you would find in a real diesel electric train. It controls the speed and direction of the train and Benson's has all the horns, bells and equipment that are found in real train. There is even a camera mounted on the front of the model train and a monitor in front of the model locomotive that gives the person at the controls the feeling they are actually operating a real locomotive.

#### **The Southern Arizona Heritage and Visitor Center opens in Tucson**

[The Southern Arizona Heritage and Visitor Center](#) is your starting point to discover all that southern Arizona, the Sonoran Desert and the Sky Islands have to offer and the area has a lot to offer! The Southern Arizona Heritage and Visitor Center is located in downtown Tucson, inside the Historic Pima County Courthouse. On offer are various exhibits, a Theater, topographical maps, Sonoran Desert diorama, a gift shop, gallery and other features designed to introduce you to new places and provide inspiration to guide your journey. Seven storytelling portals offer information on innovation, history, arts and culture, food, recreation, water and nature.

## **Arizona Tours**

### ***Greater Phoenix and Central Arizona***

#### **Salt River Art Tour at Talking Stick Entertainment District**

The [Salt River Art Tour](#) is a self-guided tour throughout the Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community's Talking Stick Entertainment District. The Salt River Indian Community represents two of 22 tribes in Arizona. Explore the Salt River Art Tour and experience the rich history and stories of the Pima and Maricopa through the eyes of Community member artists including Jeffrey Wilder, Anthony Collins and Jacob Butler. The tour is accessible by car; once at each location, it is walkable.

#### **Talking Stick Entertainment District Trail Celebrates Local Sweets**

On February 1st, the Salt River Indian Community's [Talking Stick Entertainment District](#) rolled out its newest trail, the Talking Stick Sweet Treat Trail. The Trail features sweet treats at 13 restaurants, ice cream shops and candy stores within the Talking Stick Entertainment District. The Sweet Treat Trail includes locally inspired favorites like fry bread at Talking Stick Golf Club and caramel filled churros at the District's newest quick serve restaurant- Rusty Taco, and not to miss new items like the lemon cooler pizza cookie at Barro's Italian Eatery at the Pavilions at Talking Stick. For a complete list of sweet treats on the Trail, visit [TalkingStickArizona.com/sweet-treats](https://TalkingStickArizona.com/sweet-treats).

#### **Taliesin West announces new self-guided audio tour**

UNESCO World Heritage Site, [Taliesin West](#), reopened on Oct. 15, 2020 in Scottsdale with a new self-guided audio tour. The new tour allows visitors a safe and interactive experience accessed through their personal smartphone device. The highlight of the audio tour is hearing Wright's own spoken words firsthand through original audio recordings. Wright discusses his work and sources of inspiration at Taliesin West and across the United States. Taliesin West's [response to COVID-19](#).

### ***Northern Central***

#### **Train excursions on Arizona's historic railroads**

[Free Spirit Vacations and Events](#) introduces a new way to explore Arizona's historic railroads in two days and one night. The "[Arizona Rails Package](#)" offers transportation to and from Phoenix, classic train excursions on the [Grand Canyon Railway](#) and the [Verde Canyon Railroad](#), a one night stay at the [Grand Canyon Railway Hotel](#), and transportation and guided visits to the [Grand Canyon](#) and the [Copper Art Museum](#) in Clarkdale. Priced at \$660 per person and \$550 per person for a group of two, the package is offered on September 9-10, 2021 and February 2-3, 2022. Reservations can be made by emailing [reservations@freespiritvacations.com](mailto:reservations@freespiritvacations.com) or calling (480) 926-5547.

#### **New guided hiking company offers excursions with llamas**

Family-owned and operated, [Arizona Backcountry Llamas](#) offers a variety of guided llama hiking excursions around Prescott. Hikers will explore the granite boulders, cool pines, and one of the many lake areas. Owners Chris and Janice Dunn have spent decades exploring Arizona and the west, packing with llamas. The guiding business allows the couple to share their enthusiasm for Arizona's natural and cultural history. The Dunn's ranch is home to four male llamas, Benny, Cisco, Stuart, and Dudley, and five female llamas, Anij, Roo, Jenga, Blanca, and Izzy.

## **Arizona Tourism Industry News**

### ***Greater Phoenix and Central Arizona***

#### **The Arizona Office of Tourism Launches new Wine Trail Passport**

The Arizona Office of Tourism is launching a statewide digital Arizona Wine Trail passport and interactive map powered by Bandwango. Visitors can register for the free passport and save as an icon to their phone's home screen for easy access. Geolocation enables visitors to find over 100 tasting rooms while they travel throughout Arizona.

Incentives for visiting multiple wine regions are built into the program. The passport will be available starting August 1, 2021 on [ArizonaWines.com](http://ArizonaWines.com).

### **First U.S. destination to adopt the Hidden Disabilities Sunflower supporting accessible travel market**

Mesa, Ariz. is the first U.S. travel destination to adopt the [Hidden Disabilities Sunflower](#), a program lauded for supporting travelers with various needs as a way for them to secure additional support they may require while traveling. Developed and launched in the United Kingdom, the Hidden Disabilities Sunflower is now a recognized icon that accessible travelers can utilize to discreetly be identified as having a disability. Visit Mesa, the City of Mesa's destination marketing organization, is the first Arizona Visitor Center to offer the Hidden Disabilities Sunflower complimentary lanyards and bracelets. When worn, the sunflower serves as a visual cue to trained visitor industry staff throughout Mesa who will then be able to recognize if that traveler, or traveler's companion, would like additional support during their visit.

### **New 'Meet the Maker' video series reveals authentic, only-in-Arizona experiences**

To see a true Arizona talent at work, look no further than Watson's Hat Shop of Cave Creek, Ariz., which is featured in the first episode of the Arizona Office of Tourism's new ["Meet the Maker" short film series](#). Whether it's stitching hats, rolling tamales or weaving baskets, the series highlights Arizona's robust maker culture by providing audiences a front-row seat to watch creators at work. [Click here](#) to take a step back in time and watch master craftsman Eric Watson of Watson's Hat Shop build custom-fitted hats for modern customers with antique machinery.

### **Aji Spa and Kai receive highest honors in Forbes Travel Guide's 2020 Star Awards**

[Forbes Travel Guide](#) unveiled its annual Star Rating list, awarding [Aji Spa](#) and [Kai](#) restaurant at [Sheraton Grand at Wild Horse Pass](#) with its highest rating, the Five-Star Award. Kai has maintained the Five Star accolade for 12 years and is still the only restaurant in the state with the distinction. This marks the first time Aji Spa has been bestowed the Five Star award and is the only Native American-owned spa to earn Five Stars. The spa has undergone a rigorous process of approval from Tribal Elders to ensure authenticity, correct use and respect of the culture and attention to every detail. Sheraton Grand at Wild Horse Pass, located in Phoenix, is now the only resort in Arizona to boast both a Five Star spa and Five Star restaurant within its collection of luxury amenities.

### **Butterfly Wonderland earns Certified Autism Center designation**

The [International Board of Credentialing and Continued Education Standards](#) (IBCCES) is proud to announce [Butterfly Wonderland](#) as the second attraction in Arizona—and first butterfly education facility—to become a Certified Autism Center (CAC). The CAC designation means that visitors and families with children who have autism and other sensory differences can enjoy the best possible experience that caters to their needs. To achieve today's CAC accreditation, Butterfly Wonderland completed the critical training required by IBCCES to recognize the needs of guests on the spectrum and provide necessary facility options for this demographic.

### **Swoop, Canada's leading ultra-low-cost carrier, released its expanded winter schedule**

[Swoop](#) has released its expanded winter schedule featuring the re-introduction of flights to the United States, Mexico, and the Caribbean. During the winter, the airline will provide travellers with flights to sun and fun destinations including Montego Bay in Jamaica, Las Vegas and Mesa/Phoenix in the U.S., and Cancun, Puerto Vallarta and Mazatlán in Mexico. Beginning September 17, 2021 they will fly between Edmonton and Mesa/Phoenix four times a week: Monday, Wednesday, Friday and Saturday. Flights between Toronto and Mesa/Phoenix begin on November 2, 2021 with flights on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Flights between Winnipeg and Mesa/Phoenix begin November 1, 2021 with twice weekly flights on Mondays and Friday.

### **PHX - Phoenix Sky Harbor International Airport Updates - Come Fly with Us**

Many new airlines have added or restarted routes:

**Allegiant Airlines** - Allegiant Air announced in May that the airline will begin service to Provo, Utah; and Stockton, Calif. beginning in October. Allegiant is a new airline to Phoenix Sky Harbor.

**American Airlines** - On May 27, American began its inaugural PHX-Bozeman (BZN) service. Bozeman is a new market for Phoenix. American also resumed its Jackson Hole service on May 27.

On June 2, American began its inaugural PHX-Eureka, Humboldt County, Calif. (ACV) and PHX-Idaho Falls (IDA) routes. Eureka, Humboldt County in the California Redwoods is a new market for Phoenix. Idaho Falls is also a new market for Phoenix. American also resumed its Santa Fe and Rapid City service on June 1. Both routes had been suspended since April 2020.

**Southwest Airlines** - On June 6, Southwest Airlines began its inaugural Phoenix-Bozeman service. The service will run Saturdays and Sundays June 6– Aug. 15. Southwest also kicks off the inaugural flights to Hawaii soon. Phoenix to Honolulu will fly twice daily beginning June 27 and Phoenix to Maui will also begin flying once daily beginning June 27.

**Spirit** - On May 27, Spirit Airlines announced a new PHX-St. Louis route. The daily flight will start Nov. 17 and go through March. St. Louis is a new market for the airline. American and Southwest also serve St. Louis.

To see a list of all the places you can fly from PHX, visit our [Where We Fly page](#).

### **Sun Country is adding five nonstop markets from Phoenix and one at Phoenix-Mesa Gateway**

[Sun Country Airlines](#) offers scheduled passenger service on more than 90 routes to more than 65 popular destinations. In December 2021, flights will begin to Duluth, Minn. (DLH); Green Bay, Wis (GRB); Madison, Wis (MSN), and Milwaukee, Wis. (MKE). A flight to Rochester, Minn. (RST) will begin in February 2022. Duluth, Green Bay, and Rochester are all new destinations for Phoenix. Service from Phoenix-Mesa Gateway Airport (AZA) to Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport (MSP) begins November 24, 2021, four days weekly on Monday, Thursday, Friday and Sunday.

### **New flight routes from Phoenix Sky Harbor International Airport**

[Phoenix Sky Harbor International Airport](#) announced two new flight routes during the summer months. Starting June 10, 2021, [Frontier Airlines](#) will offer a flight between Phoenix and Atlanta three days a week [Hawaiian Airlines](#) offers nonstop service, four times a week, between Phoenix and Maui from May 21 through August 15, 2021.

### **America's first new mainline airline announces flight route at Phoenix-Mesa Airport**

[Avelo Airlines](#), America's first new mainline airline in nearly 15 years, premiered at [Hollywood Burbank Airport \(BUR\)](#) with one-way fares starting at \$19 on all routes. Avelo announced a daily flight between Hollywood Burbank Airport and [Phoenix-Mesa Gateway Airport](#). For an additional cost, guests can pay for a checked bag, carry-on overhead bag, priority boarding, pets, and seating options. Avelo's 189-seat 737-800 aircraft offers 129 standard slimline 29-inch pitch seats. Pre-reserved window and aisle seating starts at \$5. Avelo aircraft also features 60 seats with 31 to 38 inches of pitch. These seats start at \$18.

### **Phoenix-Mesa Airport welcomes new airline in November 2021**

[Phoenix-Mesa Gateway Airport](#) welcomes Minneapolis-based [Sun Country Airlines](#). The airline will offer flights between the east Mesa airport and [Minneapolis-Saint Paul International Airport](#) starting Nov. 24. The route will operate four times weekly, departing Mesa on Monday, Thursday, Friday and Sunday. Tickets are on sale now with introductory fares starting at \$79 one way.

### **New non-stop flights from Phoenix Sky Harbor Airport**

March 4, 2021, [American Airlines](#) began a nonstop flight from Phoenix Sky Harbor International Airport to Culiacan in northwestern Mexico and to Calgary, Canada. [Southwest Airlines](#) began its Phoenix – Colorado Springs route March 11, 2021 and also began flying to Cancun.

### **North Central**

#### **Camp Verde and Coconino National Forest add new trails**

The [Town of Camp Verde](#) and the [Coconino National Forest](#) announce the completion of trails based out of the new [Camp Verde Sports Complex](#). The Verde Vista Loop, is a 5.5-mile non-motorized loop out of a trailhead located in the Sports Complex. The trail climbs about 500' to the top of the White Hills overlooking the Equestrian Center and

Sports complex. In addition to the Verde Vista Loop, the 1.6-mile Perimeter Loop Trail is located around the perimeter of the Sports Complex. The 10' wide trail is a more stabilized surface, making this trail easier for casual walkers, bikers and people with strollers.

## ***Southern***

### **Governor Doug Ducey designates Sierra Vista as the official “Hummingbird Capital of Arizona”**

Located in Southeastern Arizona, [Sierra Vista](#) is located near the border between Arizona and Mexico. Birders can observe nearly 15 species of hummingbirds and more than 300 other bird species in the canyons, forests, and riverbanks in and around Sierra Vista, the largest community in Cochise County. This activity has garnered wide attention from birders around the world. Southeastern Arizona has for years been a birding hotspot. Sierra Vista, and more precisely [Ramsey Canyon Preserve](#), is known by many as the “Hummingbird Capital of the World”. It is owned and operated by the Nature Conservancy, a nonprofit organization dedicated to conserving land and water around the globe. Governor Doug Ducey signed legislation to designate Sierra Vista as the official Hummingbird Capital of Arizona on May 12, 2021.

### **Willcox Wine Country new 2021 Digital Passport Promotion**

Arizona’s premier wine growing region, [Willcox Wine Country](#), has implemented an innovative, region-wide visitor [Passport Promotion](#) utilizing a digital application. The digital passport earns the holder discounts and entry to more than 120 events that began in February and continues through December 2021, including the Willcox Spring and Fall Wine Festivals, four regional interactive events, and dozens of individual vineyard experiences. Wine visitors to Willcox will “play” wine touring “games” based on Scratcher Game, Wineopoly, Scavenger Hunt and Poker Run.

### **Chiricahua National Monument certified as an International Dark Sky Park**

The [National Park Service](#) and the [International Dark-Sky Association](#) awarded [Chiricahua National Monument](#) as the 104th International Dark Sky Park. This certification recognizes the quality of the park’s night skies and provides added opportunities to enhance visitor experiences through astronomy-based interpretive programming. Chiricahua National Monument’s [response to COVID-19](#).

## ***Western Arizona***

### **Lake Havasu Classic Outboard Championships return after 31 years, Oct. 15-17, 2021**

The famed London Bridge isn’t the only thing that links Lake Havasu City to its fascinating past. The city was once home to the premier outboard powerboat race in the world. In a blast from the past, the [Lake Havasu Classic Outboard Championships](#) returns Oct. 15-17, 2021, in time for the rededication of the London Bridge. The outboard races will be part of the NGK Sparkplugs Formula 1 Powerboat Series. The original Outboard Championships in Lake Havasu City began in 1964 and continued through 1990. The three-day event will feature racing in three classes: Formula 1, Tri-Hull and Formula Lights. Race headquarters and free fan viewing is expected to be at the Nautical Beachfront Resort.

## **Cultural**

### ***Northern Arizona***

### **Grand Canyon National Park launches virtual cultural demonstrator video series**

March 2nd, 2021, [Grand Canyon National Park's Cultural Demonstrator Program](#) at Desert View launched the 'History Behind the Arts' video series. This series features cultural demonstrators from the 11 traditionally associated tribes of the Grand Canyon and highlights the history of tribal crafts and personal interviews with artisans. The Cultural Demonstration Program provides the opportunity for viewers to learn more about each tribe's culture, their history, and the skills, knowledge, and efforts involved in creating each craft. Through symbols, patterns, and designs, native art of the Southwest displays the everyday life, beliefs, dreams, visions, and long-lasting traditions of tribes.

## Celebrations

### 2021

- **Chapel of the Holy Cross** turns 65 (Sedona)
- **City of Scottsdale** celebrates its 70th Anniversary
- **Lowell Observatory** celebrates the Clark Telescope's 125 Year Anniversary (Flagstaff)
- **London Bridge** Celebrates 50 years (Lake Havasu City)

### 2022

- **El Charro Cafe** turns 100 (Tucson)
  - El Charro Cafe is the oldest Mexican restaurant in the U.S. owned by the same family. In addition, this restaurant has always been managed by women.

### 2025

- **Page** celebrates its 50 year anniversary as a city

### 2026

- **Route 66 Centennial Celebration**
  - Arizona's Route 66, also known as the Mother Road, has been more than a road. Its people and places have inspired writers, filmmakers, photographers and artists. Its (almost) 100-year history boasts neon, classic cars, diners, and cowboys as well as spectacular vistas and mystical landscapes.

**For More Information:** For more information on these topics and others, see the official Arizona travel and vacation guide from the Arizona Office of Tourism at [www.visitarizona.com](http://www.visitarizona.com). Find in-depth AZ visitor information and videos about visiting the state of Arizona, including comprehensive directories of Arizona hotels, dining and shopping, as well as things to do and places to visit throughout the Grand Canyon State.

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