

SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2015



Texas

THE MAGAZINE FOR AAA MEMBERS

JOURNEY

Wild Spirit

The Extreme Mustang Makeover puts a horse trainer's skills to the test

PLUS: MEXICO'S RIVIERA MAYA | DAYTRIP: GRANBURY
GOINGPLACES: OKLAHOMA CITY

[TOUR THIS]

Desert Delights

If you think the Greater Phoenix area's desert landscape is home to sand, cacti, and not much else, think again. Agritourism is on the rise. These foodie experiences are worth a trip. —Beth Phaner



AGRITOPIA

This residential community located in Gilbert epitomizes the urban farm experience. Founder Joe Johnston designed this 160-acre 'hood' around his family farm. Residents and visitors alike have no excuse to not eat healthfully, when available amenities include community gardening plots, the farm-to-table Joe's Farm Grill, and a 24-hour produce stand that runs on the honor system. Future plans include a 21-acre mixed-use village filled with restaurants, retail, and more. agritopia.com.

SCHNEPF FARMS

Mark and Carrie Schnepf run this family farm located about 45 miles southeast of Phoenix. It opens up to U-pickers seeking apricots, peaches, plums, and apples—and a full roster of special events. One unique culinary experience is *Dinner Down the Orchard*, a four-course meal served in the 300-acre peach orchard. \$85–\$95 per person; monthly, November, March, and April. (480) 987-3100; schnepffarms.com.



QUEEN CREEK OLIVE MILL

Across the road from Schnepf is this family-owned olive mill. Visitors can indulge in olive oil tastings as well as gourmet breakfast and lunch fare at the Eatery, the mill's Mediterranean-inspired café. Try the Vanilla Bean Olive Oil Waffles, which are served with house-made maple syrup and fresh whipped cream. If the weather is pleasant, guests can opt to dine in the olive grove. (480) 886-9290; queencreekoliveoil.com.

[SCENIC ROUTE]

Loving the Low Country



For a byway map, visit tinyurl.com/ashleyrr.

Drayton Hall

ASHLEY RIVER ROAD is only a few short miles from Charleston, South Carolina, but this scenic byway feels worlds away from the city buzz. Begin at the Church Creek Bridge on Highway 61 near the intersection with Interstate 526. The route extends a mere 11 miles north, but you can easily build a day's worth of sightseeing into the journey. —Amy S. Eckert

Drayton Hall stands just as it was when it was constructed in the mid-1700s. The stately plantation home wows with ornamented cast-plaster ceilings, hand-carved fireplace mantles, and lovely grounds. (843) 769-2600; draytonhall.org.

It's just another mile north to the elegant 17th-century **Magnolia Plantation**, famous for its gardens. In autumn, enjoy a sea of blooming rose bushes. In winter, thousands of camellias take center stage. (843) 571-1266; magnoliaplantation.com.

The byway then passes beneath strands of Spanish moss-draped live oaks en route to **Middleton Place**, a 1775 plantation once home to Arthur Middleton, a signer of the Declaration of Independence. (843) 556-6020; middletonplace.org.

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: COURTESY VIST MESA; COURTESY SCHNEPF FARMS; AND SHIPPEN PARKS/PAUL MALLIOTT/ISTOCK/PHOTOPEDIA