



How to Spend a Weekend in Tucson, Arizona

Day 1

Roadside Stop: Picacho Peak State Park

If you are driving to Tucson from Phoenix, Picacho Peak State Park is located just off I-10 about halfway between Phoenix and Tucson. It's the perfect roadside stop if the weather is cooler and you enjoy hiking.

The 3,374-foot-tall Picacho Peak dominates the Sonoran Desert landscape and can be seen from miles away. To reach the summit, you'll take the 2.8-mile roundtrip Hunter Trail.

It is an adventurous bucket list hike that involves cables, rails, steep ascents, and sheer drop-offs. It's not for the faint of heart, but if you are up for the challenge, then it is one of the best hikes in Tucson!

Pack a picnic lunch to enjoy at the top, or at one of the picnic tables located within the state park.

For more information about this hike, see our guide [10 Fun Things to Do in Tucson](#). If you enjoy hiking, you also might like our guide [11 of the Best Hikes in Phoenix](#).

Roadside Stop: Rooster Cogburn Ostrich Ranch

Rooster Cogburn Ostrich Ranch is a unique and fun roadside attraction.

You can visit and even feed a wide array of animals from around the world, including ostriches from Africa, lorikeets from Australia, sheep from St. Croix, miniature goats from Nigeria, donkeys from the Mediterranean, ducks from China, and even stingrays from Florida.

Other attractions include the "Hole in the Wall Gang" where you can feed goats as they pop their head through a hole in the wall. You can also watch the Diving Ducks dive to the bottom

of the glass tank to get food. In the Rainbow Lorikeet Forest, these colorful birds will drink from a cup of nectar in your hands.

For an additional fee, you can even take a 50-minute narrated tour around the farm on a massive monster truck! It's a fun and educational experience as the tour gives you a unique behind-the-scenes look at life on an ostrich farm.

Check-in at The Westin La Paloma Resort & Spa

After a few stops along the way, it's time to check into your hotel. I recommend staying at the [Westin La Paloma Resort & Spa](#), a three-time Condé Nast Reader's Choice Award winner.

The resort is nestled in the foothills of the beautiful Santa Catalina Mountains with gorgeous views from every angle.

It features 5 pools, a waterslide, pickleball and tennis courts, a world-class spa, and onsite dining including a fun swim-up bar and grill. It's the perfect home base for your weekend in Tucson!

Dinner at The Parish

For dinner, I recommend The Parish located about 10 minutes from the hotel. This beloved Tucson restaurant has a fun vibe, delicious food, and stellar Yelp reviews.

The Parish serves classic Southern and Cajun dishes with a modern twist. Do yourself a favor and order the Blue Cornbread with honey cinnamon butter for an appetizer!

I also loved the Compressed Watermelon Salad, but the dressing has a kick so order it on the side. The Shrimp & Grits and the Drunken Angel are two of their most popular main dishes on the menu.

Be sure to save room for the housemade bread pudding for dessert!

Day 2

Relaxing Morning at the Hotel

Enjoy a slow morning sleeping in before grabbing pastries from the onsite La Vista Caffé, or sit down for a continental breakfast at AZul Restaurant.

Head to the pool where you can lounge poolside reading a book, take a refreshing dip in the pool, or soak in the hot tub. For a truly relaxing morning, book a massage at the full-service spa!

The resort offers multiple pools, including an adults-only pool with a mineral waterfall and a heated family-friendly pool with a waterslide.

For a fun lunch, grab a plate of nachos or a burger from Sabino's, the swim-up bar located in the main pool.

Visit Nearby Museums

In the afternoon, head out to visit a few nearby museums. The Mini Time Machine Museum of Miniatures is one of our favorites.

This whimsical museum is filled with an extensive collection of miniature houses, rooms, and scenes from different eras and cultures. You could easily spend hours absorbing every little detail.

The DeGrazia Gallery in the Sun Museum is also located nearby and is a unique art gallery and museum.

It is dedicated to the works of famed Arizona artist Ted DeGrazi. He is known worldwide for his colorful paintings, sculptures, and ceramics depicting the landscape and culture of the Southwest.

The adobe mission and gallery were built by DeGrazia in the 1950s and are truly a work of art. The historic complex spreads across 10 acres and houses more than 15,000 original pieces of art.

Evening at the Hotel

Stop and grab dinner on your way back, or dine at the Contigo Latin Kitchen at the hotel.

That evening, play pickleball or tennis at the hotel or just unwind in the hot tub under the stars.

Day 3

Morning Yoga

Start your morning off with a quick workout at the fitness center, or sign up for a complimentary yoga class. Inquire at the hotel's front desk for a schedule.

Grab a quick breakfast at the hotel before checking out.

Drive the Mount Lemmon Scenic Byway

Before heading home, there's one more spot in Tucson that you don't want to miss!

Mount Lemmon is one of the most unique mountains in Arizona and has been designated as a Sky Island. It is an isolated mountain range that rises about 6,700 feet above the surrounding desert. It has a completely different biome at the top, making it an island in the sky.

The approximately 30-mile drive to the top is considered one of the most scenic drives in Arizona. The temperature will drop about 30 degrees in 30 minutes and you'll pass through 5 different ecosystems!

Essentially, the one-hour drive simulates the different landscapes you would experience if you were driving from Mexico to Canada.

The drive begins on the floor of the Sonoran Desert surrounded by saguaro cactus. As you make your way up, the saguaro are replaced by cool hoodoo rock formations.

About halfway up, you'll reach the Windy Point Vista. This popular overlook offers incredible panoramic views of the Tucson Valley and the winding road below.

Keep driving and you'll soon find yourself surrounded by a Ponderosa pine forest. Take a short detour to Rose Canyon Lake where you can have a picnic, go fishing, or enjoy a walk around the beautiful lake surrounded by pines.

There are approximately 65 hiking trails on Mount Lemmon if you want to get out and explore. The Marshall Gulch Trail is a popular one.

Once you reach the top, there is actually a little ski resort! If you are visiting in the winter, tire chains and 4WD are required to reach the summit.

Ski Valley is also a popular place to visit in the summer where you can take a 30-minute scenic ski lift ride.

If you're hungry, the Iron Door Restaurant is known for its famous chili, cornbread, and homemade pie. The Miner's Sweet Tooth sells homemade fudge, ice cream, and treats.

The [Mount Lemmon Sky Center Observatory](#) is also an incredible spot for stargazing. Check the website for programs and events.

The charming mountain village of Summerhaven is also located at the summit. The Cookie Cabin is a cozy spot to grab a slice of pizza and a legendary giant cookie with warm ice cream.

There are also a handful of cute shops and cafes at Summerhaven. You can pick up souvenirs and fudge at the Mount Lemmon General Store, and the Sawmill Run is a great spot for burgers and housemade chips.

If you want to spend the night, the Mount Lemmon Lodge has cute tiny cabins available to rent.

Drive Home

Exploring Mount Lemmon can easily take a full day. Enjoy soaking in the beauty and cooler weather before heading home.

If you are traveling with kids and have extra time, you might enjoy these [8 Fun Things to Do in Tucson with Kids](#).

And that's a wrap on your fun weekend in Tucson, I hope you enjoy these recommendations!