Bicycle Tours in USA: Bicycling Arizona's Sonoran Desert (TourzPlus™)

OVERVIEW

Enjoy a diverse selection of routes through Saguaro cactus forests and expansive grasslands framed by rugged mountains. Enjoy a park ranger led walk, a private winery tour and luncheon, and a visit to one of the oldest Spanish missions in the Southwest offer insight into the regions history and natural world. Relax by the pool in the warm sunshine, hike, play golf, bird watch, and soak in the colorful Southwestern culture. Cycling routes include options for both intermediate and avid cyclists alike as the terrain is generally rolling with plenty of longer and more challenging options, including the famed 27-mile ascent of Mount Lemmon which towers above Tucson at 9157.

Learn more about our TourzPlus™ partner tours and how they differ from regular ExperiencePlus! bicycle tours.

HIGHLIGHTS

Sonoran Desert Museum, Saguaro National Park, Tubac, Hike in Sabino Canyon, Horseback riding

TOUR FACTS

Tour Style	TourzPlus: Learn more about our TourzPlus tours at https://www.experienceplus.com/choosing-the-best-tour/styles/tourzplus
Includes	6 nights lodging; all meals except two lunches; Arizona Sonoran Desert Museum; horseback riding; shuttle to and from the airport in Tucson
Countries	USA
Begin/End	Tucson
Arrive/Depart	Tucson Int'l Airport (TUS) (Shuttle provided to and from the airport)
Total Distance	54 - 240
Avg. Daily Distance	25 - 45 per riding day
Tour Level	
Keep in Mind	We work hard to maintain consistency across all of our tours, but some trips have unique differences. Here are some things to keep in mind about this tour. Great winter getaway! Pack your shorts and ride with us in February and March.

Please Note: We may have small itinerary changes to this trip after you download this PDF document. If you have booked this trip and there are major changes, including changes to towns or activities, we'll email you directly. However, you should always be sure to refer to the online itinerary for the most up-to-date trip information including arrival and departure tips before you depart for your trip:
https://www.experienceplus.com/bike-tours/usa/biking-arizona-sonoran-desert

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DATES & PRICES

DAILY RIDE SUMMARY

Day	Distance/Gain	Terrain	Day Level	Notes
1	Test ride			
2	84km / 0m (52mi / 0ft)			Shorter optional ride available
3	77km / 0m (48mi / 0ft)			Shorter optional ride available
4	71km / 0m (44mi / 0ft)			Shorter optional ride available
5	100km / 0m (62mi / 0ft)			Shorter optional ride available
6	97km / 0m (60mi / 0ft)			Shorter optional ride available
7	Transfer Day			

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Welcome to Tucson

DAY 1: Sun, Oct 20th

Distance 24 km (15 mi)

Meals Dinner

Highlights Bike fitting, welcome dinner

Your tour leaders will meet you at the Tucson Airport for the transfer to Hacienda del Sol, your beautiful accommodations for the next three evenings. Hacienda del Sol sits atop the foothills below the Santa Catalina Mountains and features spectacular views of the mountains and the city below – especially at night. This afternoon, your leaders will fit you to your bike and provide an overview of the week. You will also have time to relax and unwind from your travels by the pool or on the lovely grounds of Hacienda del Sol. Get acquainted with your fellow travelers during a welcome reception and while dining on regional specialties in a private dining room this evening.

Saguaro National Park - East

DAY 2: Mon, Oct 21st

Distance 84 km (52 mi)

Meals Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Highlights Saguaro National Park

This morning you'll have a spectacular introduction to the Sonoran Desert. The giant saguaro along with dozens of other types of cacti, are ever-present along our quiet route through the Park. Your leaders will provide a delicious picnic lunch in the park, allowing you plenty of time to explore by bike and by foot. After lunch, join the return ride through Tucson to Hacienda del Sol or opt for the van shuttle and enjoy time by the pool or indulging in a spa treatment. Dinner is together.

Tuscon Mountain Park and Arizona Desert Museum

DAY 3: Tue, Oct 22nd

Highlights Gates Pass, Desert Museum

Visit Saguaro National Park's western expanse on a ride that winds through Tucson Mountain Park and impressive Gates Pass before descending into sweeping stands of cactus. The desert landscapes are particularly striking during today's rides and the "forests" of giant Saguaro cactus - the iconic symbols of the Southwest - stretch for miles. Opt for an extended ride or visit the amazing Arizona Sonora Desert Museum housing more than 300 animal species and 1200 varieties of plants in a beautiful natural setting. Join a docent-led tour along the two miles of walking trails or explore on your own. This stunning outdoor museum is a must-see and features its own aviary and raptor free flight demonstrations. Hikers might enjoy a nearby trek that takes you high above the desert floor and offers a great opportunity for some off bike exercise.

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Following your visit to the Desert Museum, those up for a challenge can tackle the steeper climb back over Gates Pass and follow a section of Tucson's bike path system to visit a local microbrewery en route back to our hotel. Relax by the pool or soak in the hot tub following your ride.

Distance 77 km (48 mi)

Meals Breakfast

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Patagonia

DAY 4: Wed, Oct 23rd

Distance 71 km (44 mi)

Meals Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Highlights Patagonia Lake State Park

The morning begins with a van shuttle out of town to Sonoita Mercantile, a quaint country store and deli. From here, set out on an exhilarating ride to Patagonia Lake State Park, where the roads are lightly traveled, and open vistas inspire a sense of freedom and "get away from it all" rejuvenation. Patagonia Lake is made up of a visually stunning 265 acres, with the sapphire blue hues of the waters wonderfully accenting the wheat colored fields and red rock mountains that fill the background. The lake is also the site for today's wine-paired lunch and tasting, hosted by Sonoita winery that planted the first grapevines in the region, offering a scenic and informative look into Arizona's wine production. Following lunch, opt for an epic ride to Tubac, or take a walking avian adventure with a professional birdwatcher, where you can spot a huge variety of birds, including northern cardinals, vermilion flycatchers, and red-tailed hawks. Continue into the artsy town of Tubac and the Tubac Spa & Golf Resort at Otero Ranch.

Pena Blanca Lake

DAY 5: Thu, Oct 24th

Distance 100 km (62 mi)

Meals Breakfast, Lunch

Highlights Pena Blanca Lake and Picnic

Today, ride to beautiful and remote Pena Blanca Lake. The winding route dips and climbs through unusual rock formations as it approaches the lake. Your guides will provide a picnic lunch overlooking Pena Blanca Lake, which also features hiking trails that you are free to explore. The ride following lunch parallels a creek that flows along a trail used centuries ago by missionaries who settled in the region. After the day's ride, make yourself at home at the Tubac Spa & Golf Resort at Otero Ranch. Dinner is on your own tonight. We will offer recommendations on some of the culinary highlights of Tubac for you to explore.

Arivaca or Tubac

DAY 6: Fri, Oct 25th

Highlights Arivaca, Tubac, golf, bike or walking options

Choices abound today. Spend the day exploring the sites around Tubac, one of the Southwest's foremost towns for the arts, indulge in a spa treatment (appointments must be made several weeks in advance), or play a round of golf at the resort. In Tumacácori, you might choose to join a guided tour of the remains of the oldest Spanish missions in the Southwest. You may also enjoy walking the historic de Anza Trail that runs along the river. This section of the trail is part of a historic trek undertaken by 30 Spanish families in 1775 that concluded with the building of a mission and presidio in San Francisco. For those who can't miss a day of riding, today's ride is best known for its rural roads and sweeping views to red rock mountains, which form an impressive backdrop to the north. The turn-around point is

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a funky coffee house in the tiny hamlet of Arivaca. Ride the full route or consult with your leaders for the sections that best suit your interests. This evening gather with fellow travelers for your final trip dinner in a private dining room at the resort.

Distance 97 km (60 mi)

Meals Breakfast, Dinner

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Tucson

DAY 7: Sat, Oct 26th

Highlights Tucson

Meals Breakfast

Following breakfast this morning at Tubac Golf Resort, your leaders will transfer you to the airport in Tucson. Arrival time at the airport is 10:00am and, as such, we suggest your flight reservations be planned for departure after 11:00am.

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