



ITINERARY IDEAS: OUTDOOR ADVENTURE

Whether you're looking for an energizing desert hike, a thrilling off-road tour, or wicked single tracks that put your bike handling skills to the test, Scottsdale's Sonoran Desert answers your call for adventure with options that are as varied as the landscape itself. Add in year-round sunny weather and it's easy to see why outdoor activities are a way of life in Scottsdale.



TAKE A HIKE

Hiking is a great way to see the Sonoran Desert up close. Scottsdale's McDowell Sonoran Preserve boasts more than 200 miles of shared-use trails for beginning and experienced hikers. Other popular hiking destinations include Camelback Mountain, Pinnacle Peak and McDowell Mountain Regional Park.



Timeframe: Guided hikes from 1 hour to full-day are available; self-guided hikes are at your own pace



GO MOUNTAIN BIKING

Scottsdale's Sonoran Desert foothills are ideal for mountain biking. For beginners, local outfitters provide all-inclusive guided experiences that include transportation and instruction. If you prefer to hit the tracks on your own, some outfitters will deliver rental bikes, helmets and accessories to your resort.



Timeframe: Guided tours from 4 hours to a full day are available



VENTURE OFF ROAD

Guided off-road tours by Jeep and Hummer provide insight into the desert's ecosystem, as well as the area's colorful history. Options include ecotours, night-vision tours, and combination adventures that add in activities like river rafting, hot air ballooning or horseback riding. There also are "you-drive" tours in Tomcars and C2 vehicles that put you in the driver's seat!



Timeframe: Approximately 4 hours



MAKE A SPLASH

River rafting, tubing, kayaking and SUPing are great ways to explore the area's pristine rivers and lakes. The calm waters of the Verde or Lower Salt rivers are ideal for wildlife watching, while the Upper Salt's seasonal rapids provide plenty of whitewater thrills.



Timeframe: Guided tours from 4 hours to multi-day are available.



CLIMB TO NEW HEIGHTS

Scottsdale's McDowell Sonoran Preserve is home to more than 35 designated climbing areas with a wide range of difficulty ratings on formations like Tom's Thumb, Sven Slab and Granite Ballroom. Local outfitters provide all-inclusive experiences that introduce beginners to the sport.



Timeframe: Guided climbs from 4 hours to a full day are available.



SADDLE UP

Get a taste of the Old West on a horseback riding excursion through the Sonoran Desert! Scottsdale's outfitters will match you with the right horse based on your skill level (even if you've never ridden!). Some stables also provide cookouts, hay-wagon rides and other activities.



Timeframe: Guided rides from 2 hours to full day are available



SOAR ABOVE IT ALL

Hot-air balloon flights offer amazing views as you float quietly over rolling desert terrain – sometimes low enough to see desert animals scurrying about below! Air tours to destinations like Sedona and the Grand Canyon also are great ways to enjoy Arizona from above.



Timeframe: Allow 4 hours for balloon tour experiences; air tours vary from 4 to 8+ hours depending on tour routes and options

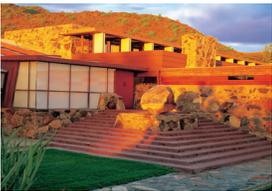


STROLL THE GARDEN

Paved, thematic trails at the Desert Botanical Garden allow you to experience the beauty of the Sonoran Desert and its exotic plant life in a more urban setting. Stop for lunch or dinner at the Garden's on-site restaurant, Gertrude's, and be sure to leave enough time to browse the gift shop.



Timeframe: 2 to 4 hours



ADMIRE ARCHITECTURE

In the 1930s, architect Frank Lloyd Wright built Taliesin West in Scottsdale's McDowell Mountain foothills using rocks and sand from the desert. Today, a variety of public tours showcase Wright's ability to seamlessly blend indoor and outdoor spaces.



Timeframe: Guided tours from 1 to 3 hours are available



DINE AL FRESCO

If you like to play outside, you'll love dining al fresco on Scottsdale's sunny restaurant patios. From urban settings like ZuZu, AZ88, Orange Sky and J&G Steakhouse to desert gems like Talavera and Palo Verde, you'll find both innovative cuisine and great views on the menu. You can even enjoy a gourmet meal in the middle of the desert with Cloth & Flame!



Timeframe: At your own pace

For more information on these and other Scottsdale adventures, contact our destination experts at tourism@experiencescottsdale.com.

