

goop Travel



A Relaxing Weekend in the Scottsdale Desert

You don't have to love golf to love Scottsdale—but you should definitely be into relaxation. Just east of Phoenix, the city has lots to see, including some spectacular [design](#), incredible desert hikes, lots of great art, and some pretty fantastic Western history (the latter in the city's charming Old Town neighborhood). The food's amazing, as are the spa treatments and the museums—not to mention the margaritas.

STAY



ANDAZ SCOTTSDALE

This property is so serene, you can almost hear the birds moving through the air. The hotel is made up of 185 private bungalows and suites that dot the walking paths weaving through the grounds. Each is outfitted with a private patio, huge bathrooms, mid-century modern furniture, and quirky sculptures, paintings, and ceramics by local Scottsdale artists from the nearby Cattle Track Arts Compound. There's lots to do right on the property: Have blue corn pancakes delivered to your bungalow and eat them on the patio overlooking Camelback Mountain. Head to a yoga class at the fitness center before getting a Himalayan salt stone massage at the spa. Sip margaritas by the pool, or take a nap on one of the property's several hammocks. At night, head to Weft & Warp, the on-site restaurant that serves, among other delicious things, a decadent, creamy scallop risotto and incredible desserts. Stay for the live music before melting into your oversize bed.

SEE



CATTLE TRACK ARTS COMPOUND

[Cattle Track Arts Compound](#) is a mix of adobe structures dating back eighty years that's now an artists' residence, with studios for local creatives like painter Timothy Chapman, master printmaker Brent Bond, ceramicist Mary van Dusen, and magician [Craig Davis](#). What's great is that visitors are invited to weave in and out of the studios and talk to the artists. Give yourself several hours there, and try to meet Mark McDowell, a Cattle Track artist in residence and local Renaissance man who's an encyclopedia of Scottsdale history, an artist's artist, and a most hilarious, loquacious, immediate best friend. (If you can't find McDowell here, he often plays with the band at Andaz, where he's helped curate and create the art.)



MUSEUM OF THE WEST

The wildness, grandeur, and folklore of the American West come alive at this museum in Old Town in dramatic temporary exhibits as well as through the permanent collection. Especially worth checking out: the massive display of Hopi ceramics; saddles, spurs, and boots from old mining towns (including artifacts from a saloon once co-owned by Wyatt Earp); and striking bronze sculptures of historical figures by the award-winning sculptor John Coleman. It's all impressive, but the exquisite abstract paintings of western America by Maynard Dixon, on view through August 2020, are especially worth seeing. We also loved the yearlong exhibit of works by female artists at the nearby Scottsdale Museum of Contemporary Art.

EAT



THE MISSION OLD TOWN

You'll be dreaming about this guacamole—handmade, right at your table—and the margaritas, which rival any you'll get in Baja. There's a pozole that will melt your heart and tacos (mahi mahi, roasted butternut squash, or mole duck) on fresh, hand-pressed corn tortillas. It's all incredible, but get the roasted pork shoulder. Big enough for two, it's slow-cooked for twelve hours and comes out sticky and sweet, served with a habanero pineapple glaze.

FNB

You know you're in for a good time when you walk into cozy, boisterous FnB, tucked in the historic Craftsman Court downtown. There are three small dining rooms, all painted a bright crimson and glowing from dimly lit, funky chandeliers. Charleen Badman, the James Beard Award-winning chef and co-owner, takes you through Arizona, the US, and the world with her seasonal menu. There's a farçous (Swiss chard pancake) with thick labneh; crunchy radishes with date butter, hazelnuts, and grilled locally made bread; a Macau-style chicken with greens, rice, peppers, and peanuts; and if you're lucky, Badman may make her potato latkes and applesauce. (If that happens, order two and never look back.) There is a considered selection of wines from across the globe, including a few labels from small, stellar vineyards right in Arizona.



FAT OX

The answer to “What do I order?” at Fat Ox is staring at you from the middle of the menu: twenty-five layer lasagna. Bolognese, thin house-made lasagna noodles, San Marzano tomatoes, whipped ricotta, and charred rapini make up the many layers, and they’re all made fresh every morning. While you’re waiting for it, dig into a Caesar salad for two (they prepare it tableside) and the mozzarella with cara cara oranges. The other standout is a brick-grilled organic chicken that comes with creamy polenta and dripping with jus.

SIP

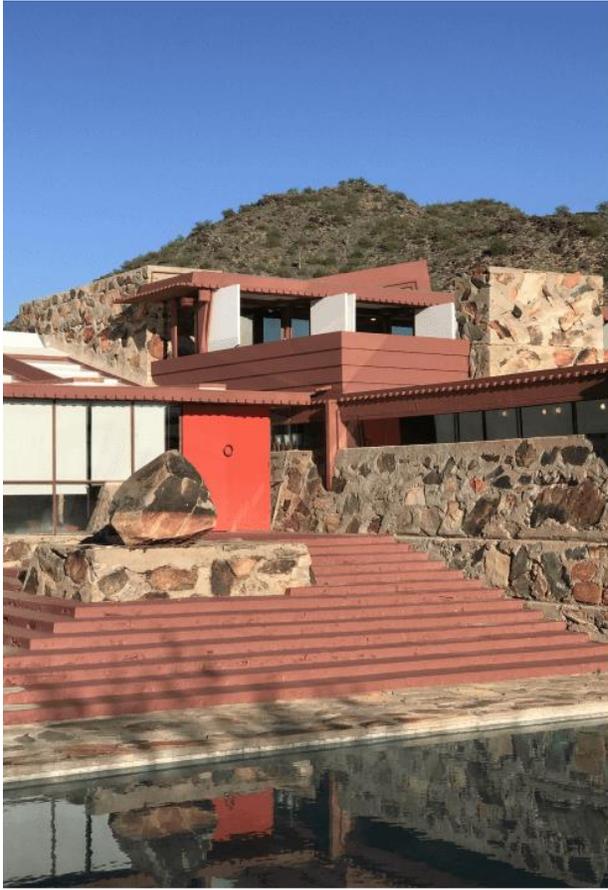
LDV WINERY TASTING ROOM

If you're a wine lover, Old Town in Scottsdale has several intimate tasting rooms all serving wines made from local grapes. Our favorite is the LDV Tasting Room. Owned by couple Peggy Fiandaca and Curt Dunham, LDV serves wine mostly made of Rhône grapes—Syrah, grenache, Viognier—grown on their winery in southeast Arizona. They focus on natural methods, following sustainable farming practices and using minimal processing to produce wines that are clean and crisp. This is a lovely spot to spend a weekend afternoon or have a pre- or postdinner glass of something delicious.

DON'T MISS

TALIESIN WEST

In the 1930s, legendary architect Frank Lloyd Wright found winter respite in the Scottsdale desert. A warmer, drier climate was prescribed by his doctor, but the architect quickly fell for Arizona. He laid claim to a piece of land on the foothills of the McDowell Mountains—which he described as “a look over the rim of the world”—and painstakingly built a house, Taliesin West (the original Taliesin is in Wright's home state, Wisconsin). Much of it was made of elements sourced from the land, so the house looks a bit as if it sprouted from the ground after a good rain. It's a UNESCO World Heritage site, and the best way to see both interior and exterior is a guided tour. Whatever your opinion on Wright's aesthetic—and personal life—may be, this high-desert studio-residence is absolute proof that the man was a genius.





ECHO CANYON TRAIL AT CAMELBACK MOUNTAIN

First, a little housekeeping: This hike is intense, ascending drastically from approximately 1,424 feet to 2,700 in the mere one-and-a-half miles to its summit. It's rocky, uneven, and often crowded on the weekends. Arm yourself with plenty of water, sunscreen, proper shoes, and a fully charged cell phone, and you're in for thrillingly extreme experience, in terms of the workout and the scenery. The rocky, terra-cotta ridges glow, and the landscape looks as if it falls over the edge

of the earth. Even if you don't plan to hike to the top, or at all, it's worth heading here to take it all in from the base of the trail.

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