

Arizona County Seat Challenge - Tour #2

November 3-13, 2021 • 11 Days • \$3150

This is a fast-moving, 11-day circular Adventure, encountering a wide range of Arizona history, culture, and natural wonders as we walk in the county seats of all fifteen counties of this Southwestern sunshine mecca while driving an average of only 195 miles per day.

TOUR COMPLETE

[Contact Us](#)

[Tour Type: Volkssport](#)

- [Overview](#)
- [Reviews](#)

In 1912, barely 100 years ago, Arizona was the last of the lower 48 states to join the Union. In the 1950s, when air conditioning became a modern-day shield against the oppressive heat of Arizona's summers, the Phoenix area exploded into one of the fastest growing metropolitan areas in the U.S. It's a name that has become synonymous with sunshine and snowbirds.

But small town Arizona is what makes this experience special. The Old West mining towns of southern Arizona are replete with the drama of boom and bust, with stories of gunfights and growing pains, and with struggles between building without boundaries countered by society's need for law and order.

The southern part of the state intrigues us with its mineral and prospecting heritage, and most county seats have some connection with mining. The northern part of the state thrills us with its geological wonders at places like Petrified Forest National Park, Grand Canyon National Park, and Sedona.

If you're ready to get moving and enjoy the warmth of an Arizona spring, join us on this epic journey through the sunny Southwest. We have space for a maximum of 18 walkers on a full-size bus.

Highlights:

- **Walks in all 15 of Arizona's county seats** - most are among their county's oldest towns offering fascinating Old West tales and historic streets lined with 19th century architecture
- **Sabino Canyon Recreation Area** - situated at the base of the Santa Catalina Mountains, one of Arizona's most popular getaways provides a lovely trail that is flanked by steep cliffs, crosses Sabino Creek on seven stone bridges, and is surrounded by unique desert vegetation like the magnificent saguaros

- **Tombstone** - the wooden boardwalks along the dusty main drag of this Old West legend invite us to tread where the spirits of Wyatt Earp, Doc Holliday, and the Clanton Brothers live on in “the town too tough to die”
- **Petrified Forest National Park** - the richly marbled petrified logs are worth the visit, and the multi-hued kaleidoscope of color in the Painted Desert is a surprise bonus
- **Grand Canyon National Park (optional)** - the Grand Canyon Railway takes us to the South Rim to drink in indescribable scenes of one of the natural wonders of the world

What's Included:

Pricing is per person and is based on double occupancy.

- All land travel by motorcoach as outlined
- Tourist class or better hotel accommodations
- Breakfasts where included by the hotel
- 15 walk routes as listed
 - Phoenix
 - Florence
 - Tucson
 - Nogales
 - Bisbee
 - Safford
 - Clifton
 - Globe
 - St. Johns
 - Holbrook
 - Flagstaff
 - Prescott
 - Kingman
 - Parker
 - Yuma
- Walking fees for 15 walks
- WAI guide service throughout
- Tipping for coach driver and WAI guide
- Pricing is based on double occupancy. A limited number of single rooms are available for a supplement of \$550. We also provide a roommate matching service for those interested.

Visits to/Admission fees:

- All 15 county seats in the state of Arizona
- Sabino Canyon Recreation Area
- Historic Tombstone
- Petrified Forest National Park
- Sedona

Optional Activities:

- Visit to Grand Canyon's South Rim either by rail or rented car (not part of itinerary but WAI will advise with bookings)

"Thank you for bringing us up close & personal with this amazingly colorful area. This Unforgettable Utah excursion reminded me I live in the most beautiful and diverse country on earth."

-Kay E; Bedford, IN

"I think that the area covered by the trip is the most amazing mind-blowing area. This trip has been placed in the top 5 of trips I've have taken with WAI."

-Jill S; Vacaville, CA

"It truly was Unforgettable!"

-Kathleen I; San Lorenzo, CA

"Loved every moment. I'm so happy I was convinced to take this trip. Great experience! Thanks to the work and great company of Dan, Amanda, Ruth and Ron. This trip was much better than expected."

-Diana H; ON, Canada

"Once again WAI has put together another fantastic trip. Many Thanks!"

-Mamie B; Venice, FL

"I really enjoy and appreciate how WAI includes the local culture in the trips. This was my 3rd WAI trip."

-Debbie E; Renton, WA

"Glad a 2nd trip was offered and I didn't miss out on an outstanding adventure. Unforgettable was right."

-Virginia N; Yakima, WA

"I'm impressed with WAI. We would consider another trip...Denise & Pat were outstanding. The whole group was wonderful & we will miss being with them."

-Cecile M; Portland, OR

"I'll be back again & again!..Great organization, great knowledgeable guides, always a great group, new friends with like interests and seeing old friends."

-Margie M; Gaithersburg, MD

"We always have a good time and know that we will see and learn a lot more than we would if we tried to plan it for ourselves."

-Bob S; Portland, OR

- [360.260.9393](tel:360.260.9393)
- [Email Us](#)



Adventure Pace

Tour Pace: 1 2 3 4 5

Walk Challenge: 1 2 3 4 5

[About Adventure Pace](#)

Adventure Pace

How much Adventure do you want? Here are a few features to help gauge the following factors on each tour. **Tour Pace:** On a scale of 1 (slowest pace) to 5 (fastest pace), we've rated the following factors: number of 1-night hotels; driving miles per day; fullness of schedule; mid-tour airline flights; high elevation setting; and average amount of walking per day.

Walk Challenge: This number represents an average walk difficulty rating for the tour using a scale of 1 (easiest) to 5 (hardest).

[Contact Us](#)

Important Info



Group Size

Maximum 18 travelers in a full size motorcoach



Hotels

Strategically located Superior Tourist Class hotels or better



Transportation

Included. We use full-size motorcoaches with a seating capacity of 40+ seats.



Airfare

Not included. Start and finish point is Phoenix, Arizona. Travelers fly into and out of the Phoenix Sky Harbor International Airport (PHX).



Meals

Most breakfasts, where provided by hotels (due to Covid-19 concerns, no group meals are included at present)



Traveler Age

Our travelers usually range from 50-75 years of age. All ages welcome!

Itinerary

Click on each day to reveal more details.

[Day 1-Nov 3: Arrive Phoenix, Arizona](#)

We gather today in the fabled Valley of the Sun to begin our exploration of Arizona by walking in all fifteen county seats. Though the moniker “Valley of the Sun” was dreamed up by advertising agents in the 1920s to draw tourism, Phoenix truly is a sun-drenched state capital. With 300 days of sunshine a year—an amount of sunlight received on par with the Africa’s Sahara Desert—Phoenix is the recipient of more sunshine than any other major city on Earth!

Our hotel is just a stone’s throw from the walk start point hosting several year round events. Those arriving early are welcome to get a head start on walking Arizona!

[Day 2-Nov 4: Phoenix - Tucson](#)

Walk #1: Phoenix - 5 KM, rated 1A

Walk #2: Florence - 6 KM, rated 1A

Phoenix is the county seat of Maricopa County and one of largest state capitals in the US. Its founding, nevertheless, is the stuff of which Wild West legends are made. Maricopa County’s first elected officer was that of sheriff. It was a 3-way race until two of the candidates squared off in a duel, resulting in one death, ironically named Jim Favorite, and the withdrawal from the race by the victorious duelist.

After our Phoenix walk, we head south into Pinal County to Florence, the county seat. Florence is one of the oldest towns in Pinal County and boasts over 25 buildings on the National Register of Historic Places. The town was settled on the south bank of the Gila River, which formed the border between Mexico and the United States prior to 1853, when the Gadsen Purchase allowed the US to annex southern Arizona and part of New Mexico. Florence is also notable as the site of the Tunnel Saloon Gabriel-Phy gunfight (1888) and the tragic traffic-accident death (1940) of cowboy movie star and Florence resident, Tom Mix.

[Day 3-Nov 5: Tucson - Sierra Vista](#)

Walk #3: Tucson - 5 KM, rated 2A

Walk #4: Nogales - 5 KM, rated 2A

Tucson is the county seat for Pima County, but the day's first walk is just north of the city in Santa Catalina Mountains' lovely Sabino Canyon. The trail is a paved nature path that crosses Sabino Creek several times on Depression-era stone bridges built by WPA/CCC teams.

We continue south from Sabino Canyon towards the Mexican border and the tour's southernmost walk. Nogales is the county seat for Santa Cruz County and bills itself as the "Birthplace of Arizona's History". The claim is solid, based upon Nogales location along an ancient migratory path and trade route; later known as El Caminos Real (The King's Highway) the route was used by Spanish conquistadors in search of fabled stores of wealth between New Spain and its outposts to the north. Nogales continues to be a major artery of cross-border trade, relying especially on its sister city Nogales, Sonora, on the Mexican side of the border, with its huge cluster of American manufacturing plants. With a number of buildings listed on the National Register of Historic Places, the walk provides fascinating insight into a historic border town.

[Day 4-Nov 6: Sierra Vista - Clifton](#)

Walk #5: Bisbee - 5/10 KM, rated 3A

Walk #6: Safford - 5/10 KM, rated 1A

Bisbee is the county seat for Cochise County, tracing its roots to copper, gold, and silver mining, beginning in 1880. The Wild West drama that ensued here involved deportation of striking miners, at gunpoint, in 1917, and the July 1919 Bisbee Riot, a racially-charged altercation between African American Buffalo soldiers and white law enforcement officers. Our trail explores Old Bisbee, including two sets of the town's famous stairs (note the 3A rating) and the only 4-story building in the world with ground floor access for each floor.

Our lunch break today is not far north in legendary Tombstone, one of the last boom towns of the Old West. The most productive silver district in Arizona history, the town is more famous as the setting for the epic Gunfight at O.K. Corral between the Earp brothers, Wyatt, Virgil, and Morgan, along with Doc Holliday, and members of the outlaw band known

as The Cowboys.

Today's second walk is in Safford, county seat for Graham County. Another historic mining town in southern Arizona, Safford was founded in the 1870s. Entering town, the billboard declares its economic base to be "Copper, Cattle & Cotton". From Bisbee, we climb through the Gila Box Riparian National Conservation Area to Clifton, a small mountain town that we call home for tonight.

[Day 5-Nov 7: Clifton - Show Low](#)

Walk #7: Clifton - 5 KM, rated 2A

Walk #8: Globe - 4/6KM, rated 4D/2B

Clifton, home to less than 4000 souls, is the county seat of Greenlee—Arizona's most sparsely populated county. The Clifton Townsite Historic District boasts 41 contributing buildings on its National Register of Historic Places for "its intact example of architecture typical of Arizona's mining towns of the day". The Morenci Mine continues as the largest copper mining operation in North America, and one of the world's largest.

Winding our way north, we stop for lunch and our second walk in Globe, county seat for Gila County. Globe was home to one of the world's most prolific copper mines, Old Dominion Copper Company. Its historic district is another proud entry on the National Register of Historic Places. Walkers can choose between a 4 KM mine route on unimproved dirt trails with significant climbing, or a 6 KM walk on sidewalks through the historic district.

[Day 6-Nov 8: Show Low - Williams](#)

Walk #9: St Johns - 5 KM, rated 2A

Walk #10: Holbrook - 5 KM, rated 2A

County seat of Apache County, St. Johns started as a Spanish-American agriculture community in the 1870s. Whimsically-named Snowflake was Apache County's first county seat, but St. John's took over within a year and has been county seat for all but two years since. The politically potent Udall family, including one presidential candidate, hails from St. Johns.

Next stop is Petrified Forest National Park where beautifully marbled chunks of petrified wood lie strewn around the desert like a discarded game of oversized, prehistoric, pick-up sticks. We enjoy a short trail (2 KM) through Blue Mesa riding our coach around the upper part of the park to see Painted Desert, a series of multi-hued badlands providing a kaleidoscope of bizarre, mineral-induced, colored formations.

We join Route 66 as we approach Holbrook, county seat of Navajo County. An easy, flat walk here takes us through the Holbrook Cemetery and the grounds of the Wigwam Motel, of Route 66 fame. Following America's Mother Road westward, we arrive in Williams, one of

Route 66's most charming towns, for a two-night stay.

[Day 7-Nov 9: Activities from Williams](#)

Optional Grand Canyon South Rim Walk - 5/10 KM

After nearly a week of our busy, 2-walks-a-day schedule, today is a free day. Our hotel is just a few minutes from the shops, restaurants, and diners of Route 66; browsing, window-shopping, and snacking are a great way to enjoy the Route 66 ambiance and relax.

For those ready to keep moving, however, the Grand Canyon is within striking distance! Grand Canyon National Park is currently not accepting groups, so though your guide will be along for the fun, this is officially a no-host opportunity. There are two ways to get to the Canyon, by vintage railroad or by renting a car and sharing the cost. Grand Canyon Railway charges about \$85 per person round-trip in coach class. The train departs at 9:30 am (train station walkable from our hotel) and arrives at the Canyon at 11:45 am. You can return on either the 3:30 or 4:30 pm train, getting back before 7 pm. The other idea is to rent a car, making the trip cheaper (you can share the cost) and spending less time en route and more time at the Canyon.

WAI has a set of walk directions you can use if you like, but it's pretty hard to get lost on the excellent Rim Trail. It's hard to imagine a more conspicuous landmark than the spectacular Grand Canyon, easily one of planet Earth's most stupendous spectacles!

[Day 8-Nov 10: Williams - Prescott](#)

Walk #11: Flagstaff, 5 KM; rated 1B

Walk #12: Prescott - 5 KM, rated 1A

Just under 7,000 feet elevation, Flagstaff is a mountain town that celebrates outdoor life and its proximity to the Grand Canyon. Our walk in the seat of Coconino County weaves through Northern Arizona University, winds through the historic district, and includes a section along historic Route 66.

Lunch today is in Sedona at the end of lovely Oak Creek Canyon. The town is known for its red rock formation and as a mecca for new age tourism drawn by purported spiritual vortices. Our second walk is in Prescott, county seat of Yavapai County and one-time capital of the Arizona Territory. The route offers historic buildings and homes, antique shops, and more Old West ambiance. Barry Goldwater, Republican nominee for president in 1964, announced his candidacy from the steps of the Yavapai County Courthouse.

[Day 9-Nov 11: Prescott - Parker](#)

Walk #13: Kingman - 5 KM, rated 1A

Walk #14: Parker - 5 KM, rated 1A

Mohave County's seat is Kingman, another iconic stop along America's Mother Road.

Kingman is also the home of favorite son, actor Andy Devine, known for character roles he played, especially in westerns, with his signature raspy voice. Turning south to begin closing our Arizona loop, we end the day in Parker, county seat of La Paz County. Situated on the banks of the Colorado River, diminutive Parker was founded just after the turn of the 20th century and is currently home to just over 3000 people.

[Day 10-Nov 12: Parker - Phoenix](#)

Walk #15: Yuma - 6 KM, rated 1A

Our last walk takes us once again within a stone's throw of the Mexican border. Yuma is county seat for a county of the same name, and also sits along the Colorado River. Our trail here follows bike paths and city sidewalks through historic Yuma. Today's schedule includes only one walk to give us time for the return drive to Phoenix and a leisurely evening of socializing, reminiscing, and preparing for tomorrow's journey back north.

[Day 11-Nov 13: Depart Phoenix](#)

Thank you for being part of the first Arizona County Seat Challenge tour. What a privilege to experience the history, culture, and natural wonders of Arizona while completing the challenge of walking all 15 county seats of our 48th state!

More Details

Click on each heading for more details.

[How do I lock in my place on this Adventure?](#)

To register, a transferable \$200 deposit is required to hold your spot. This amount is non-refundable; however, up until 60 days before departure, it can be transferred to a different tour. A final payment is due 60 days before departure and you will receive a prompt email from us a week or two in advance.

An email with critical information on flight arrangements will be sent soon after registration, with important details about steps to take in the months before your trip. Please do not buy your airline tickets until you review the Flight Arrangements email.

Please follow this link to read our full [General Tour Conditions](#).

[What's a Volkssport Tour?](#)

A volkssport tour streamlines the tour planning process and focuses more on walks and a bit less on sightseeing. The objective is to offer more walking and more volkssport stamps (a record of walks volkswalkers keep in a passport-like walking book), along with keeping the price lower.

Primary differences between Curated Classic and Volkssport Tours:

- Walks offered are hosted by clubs, not planned by WAI staff. Most often, they are self-guided walks using club-provided maps and directions.
- The itinerary is focused more on local club walks and less on sightseeing and cultural activities.
- Itineraries tend to be paced faster, offering walks in more locales.
- Though extensive work is done by in-office, no on-site planning is done by WAI tour planners.
- Volkssport Tours tend to be limited to the US. International tours generally follow the Classic Curated model.
- A larger number of walkers are accepted on volkssport tours. During 2021, however, the maximum for all tours is 18 travelers.

[How are Walks Conducted?](#)

Walks are all year-round events sponsored by local clubs. As such, they are self-guided walks and walkers will be furnished with maps and directions. The WAI guide will also participate and walkers are welcome to walk with the WAI guide.

Departure time after each walk will be announced before the walk so as walkers are free to manage their time according to their preferences. In some cases, walkers may choose to enjoy attractions of the town rather than finish the route. The time is yours to use as you wish.

Most trails are on the easy side. Only one walk is rated above a “2” (Bisbee), and another has an optional section that is rated “4” (see Walk Ratings below for description of ratings).

[Walk Ratings](#)

We generally walk at a pace of 2 to 3 miles per hour. In most cases, we are not “strolling.” We are walking at a relaxed but steady pace. Your experience will be significantly affected by your level of physical fitness.

If not walking regularly at home, we strongly recommend that you make a priority of “training” beforehand in order to both enjoy the trip and avoid medical issues due to overexertion. If you have questions about your ability to participate, please talk with our office.

We have adopted a walk difficulty rating system which contains a numeric indicator for trail incline and an alpha indicator for trail terrain. The explanation for this system is presented below:

INCLINE

1. Very small hills or very little stair climbing. Cumulative elevation gain from Starting Point: up to 200 feet.
2. Some moderate hills and stair climbing. Cumulative elevation gain from Starting Point:

200-1000 feet.

3. Some significant hill or stair climbing. Cumulative elevation gain from Starting Point: 1000-2000 feet.

4. Lots of significant hills or stair climbing. Cumulative elevation gain from Starting Point: 2000-3500 feet.

5. Many steep hills. Cumulative elevation gain from Starting Point: more than 3500 feet.

TERRAIN

A. Almost entirely on pavement.

B. A significant part of the route is on well-groomed trails with very few obstacles.

C. A significant part of the route is on somewhat difficult terrain (rocky / rooted paths or soft sand).

D. A significant part of the route is on very difficult terrain.

E. The majority of the route is on very difficult terrain.

[How Is Airfare Arranged?](#)

This tour starts and finishes in Phoenix, Arizona. The logical airport choice is Phoenix Sky Harbor International Airport (PHX). The official start point for this Adventure is the Hampton Inn & Suites Phoenix Downtown.

Transportation from/to the airport on the first and last day can be easily managed either with the light rail system (a station is 5-minute-or-less walk from hotel) or taxi, Uber, or Lyft. More details about flight arrangements and travel agent contact information will be available upon registration.

[Tour Accommodations](#)

Good quality, tourist-class accommodations are the standard for our Adventure. Most accommodations on this tour are selected primarily as a practical base from which to pursue our itinerary.

Because much of this Adventure is in small town Arizona, a few of our properties are motels reflecting the spirit of our setting, which we think you'll enjoy. Many, but not all, of our accommodations on this adventure are either single-floor or have elevators. Yet, travelers should be able to carry their luggage up a number of steps to get to a second-floor room if necessary.

[Elevation on Tour](#)

Most of this tour takes place on high desert between 1000 feet and 7000 feet above sea level. Most walks take place between 3000 and 5500 feet above sea level. The optional trip to the South Rim of the Grand Canyon takes walkers to 7129 feet above sea level, the highest elevation of the trip.

[Travel Insurance](#)

WAI believes strongly in the importance of travel insurance for financial and medical protection from any number of unforeseen circumstances that can arise before departure or during your Adventure. This is now especially true in the era of COVID-19, which is typically treated like any other illness for travel insurance purposes. Many travel insurance providers are available for you to consider. Laura Pfahler and Sharon Mitchell of World Travel Inc. are travel agents who provide air travel and insurance services to many WAI travelers.

- Laura Pfahler: 503.434.6401 or llp@wtpdx.com
- Sharon Mitchell: 971.261.2091 or smitchell@wtpdx.com

Check out [Insurance Tips](#) from World Travel for a short introduction to travel insurance. (NOTE: WAI receives no commission or financial remuneration from World Travel Inc.).

As always, do some shopping to ensure you are getting the best value. Using the [SquareMouth.com](#) website can be a good way to compare pricing.

Other options include:

- Allianz
- Betins
- Travel Guard
- Travel Insured International

NOTE: We suggest purchasing from a reputable, well-established insurance company (avoid buying insurance from an unknown company found only online). Travelers interested in purchasing "cancel for any reason" insurance coverage should be careful to check pricing and terms BEFORE they register for a tour. Recent changes in the international travel landscape has caused changes in the policies of some insurance companies, and made the purchase of this particular type of policy even more time-sensitive.

[COVID-19 Policies and Procedures](#)

The [Our Approach to Fun but Prudent Travel](#) document identifies and explains Covid-19 mitigation policies and procedures WAI is using as a starting point for our 2021 tours. Because the knowledge base about COVID-19 changes daily, we review these policies and procedures on an ongoing basis, and will, of course, notify travelers on tour of updates as we approach the departure date of your tour.

Contact our office with any questions at 360.260.9393 or fun@walkingadventures.com.

[COVID-19 Travel Waiver](#)

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What Happens Next?

Upon registering for this Adventure, you will receive a welcome email and initial invoice notifying you of your tour balance and due date. You will be able to make that payment online or over the phone as well. Any other payments necessary for optional services or one-off

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A Flight Arrangements email with critical information on booking your flights will be sent soon after registration, as well as important steps to take in the months before your trip. Please do not buy your airline tickets until you review the Flight Arrangements email.

About 70 days before departure, you will receive a final statement reminder about the final tour payment, which is due 60 days before departure. Please see our [General Tour Conditions](#) for the full terms and conditions for participation in this Adventure.

Around 2-3 weeks before departure, you will receive a final email packet with details of the program, including hotel names and contact information, a list of fellow travelers, and a more detailed daily schedule.

Take a few minutes to peruse the itinerary and imagine walking amongst the sunny desert scenery and Wild West lore of Arizona's 15 counties when most of the US is headed towards winter. An delightful kaleidoscope of color and diverse landscape awaits on this wide-ranging overview of the state. It's still true...walking is the best way to experience our world.