

Tucson Rendezvous

January 17 - 20, 2026 • 4 Days • \$1975

We invite you to join us for our **Tucson Rendezvous** – a special gathering to celebrate travel, friendship, and the beauty of this remarkable corner of the USA.

Next January, experience sunny Tucson with us – a land of towering saguaros, breathtaking sunsets, Wild West legends, rich Mexican cultural heritage, and unforgettable cuisine as a UNESCO City of Gastronomy.

Explore the itinerary below, crafted with a variety of walks and activities, while ensuring plenty of time to relax and connect with fellow travelers.

This Tucson Rendezvous is also a wonderful chance to meet the new WAI 2.0 team, as they take the reins from current owner Dan Friesen. We expect at least two guides from Borealis Trekking to join us from Portugal, along with Scott Isom, our new WAI leader, and many of your favorite WAI guides – all coming together to make this event truly special.

Relax & Ride

For those preferring a gentler pace, our Relax & Ride itinerary offers excursions with minimal walking.

Extend Your Stay

Tucson offers so many incredible experiences that it's hard to fit them all into just a few days. To help you make the most of your time, we're offering a selection of optional excursions that can be added to the beginning or end of your adventure. These excursions will be available on **January 17** and **January 20** and will be open for booking within the next couple of weeks. Here's a quick preview of what's in store.

Wild West Tombstone Excursion

Journey to historic Tombstone with a local guide, including stops at the Courthouse Museum, the Rose Tree Museum (home of the world's largest rosebush), and the famous Bird Cage Theatre. On the way back to Tucson, enjoy a guided tour of the stunning San Xavier del Bac Mission.

Kartchner Caverns Deep Cave Visit

Explore the awe-inspiring Kartchner Caverns State Park, touring either the Big Room or the Rotunda/Throne Room with a knowledgeable park guide.

Tucson Guided Walking Tour (10K)

Explore Tucson on foot with this engaging walk through the colorful downtown area, the

historic Barrio Viejo, and segments of the Turquoise Trail, connected by a fun ride on the Sun Link streetcar.

Mt. Lemmon Scenic Vistas Excursion

Take a drive up Mt. Lemmon, enjoying fantastic viewpoints overlooking Tucson, the Sonoran Desert, and the Santa Catalina Mountains. Along this approximately 24-mile route, travelers experience a striking transition through multiple climate zones and ecosystems—a change often compared to driving from Mexico to Canada in just an hour. Includes fun and scenic stops along the way.

Hot Air Balloon Tucson Panoramas

Float over the Sonoran Desert for a breathtaking bird's-eye view, complete with a champagne toast. Your flight may skim just feet above the desert floor for wildlife viewing, then soar thousands of feet up to reveal sweeping views of distant cities and lakes.

Tucson Guided Bus Tour

Orient yourself to Tucson with this guided city tour, featuring informative stops to introduce you to its history, culture, and unique charm.

Flavors of Tucson

Experience Tucson's UNESCO-recognized culinary scene with a food tour that lets you taste your way through this vibrant city. One of our favorite ways to truly get to know a place!

Sabino Canyon Crawler Excursion

Relax on a one-hour round-trip tour aboard the Sabino Canyon Crawler, traveling 7.4 miles through gorgeous desert scenery with recorded commentary and hop-on, hop-off stops along the route.

University of Arizona Walk (5K)

Enjoy a self-guided stroll through the beautiful and historic University of Arizona campus.

Note: Activity levels for each excursion will be designated when published.

[Book Now Contact Us](#)

[Tour Type: Classic Curated](#)

Trip Details

- [What's Included](#)

Including:

- All land travel as outlined
- First-class hotel accommodations in the Tucson Marriott University Park Hotel
- 4 meals: all breakfasts, a welcome dessert, and 1 dinner as listed in itinerary (BD)
- 2 walk routes as listed plus an optional walk in historic Tucson on Day 1 or Day 4 for those arriving early or staying late, along with a self-guided walk on the University of Arizona campus
- Walking fees for 2 walks for those collecting AVA/IVV Volkssport credit (if sanctions approved)
- WAI guide service throughout
- All tipping for coach drivers, any local guides, and group meals
- Pricing is based on double occupancy. A limited number of single rooms are available for a supplement of \$325. We also provide a roommate matching service for those interested.

Visits to / Admission fees:

All Travelers

- Saguaro National Park (including AVA walk for walkers)
- Old Tucson Studio tour
- Arizona Sonora Desert Museum
- University of Arizona Arboretum Walk

Main Itinerary Only

- Sabino Canyon with walk
- Downtown Tucson Guided Bus Tour

Relax & Ride Itinerary Only

- Wild West Tombstone excursion with local guide: Tombstone Courthouse State Historic Park Museum, Bird Cage Theater, and Rose Tree Museum, San Xavier del Bac Mission

Optional excursions:

- Karchner Caverns State Park Deep Cave Visit with either the Rotunda Throne Tour or the Big Room Tour
- Mount Lemmon Drive on the Sky Island Scenic Byway
- Hot Air Balloon Tucson Panoramas over the Sonora Desert
- Tucson Food Tour (Tucson was the first city recognized as a UNESCO City of Gastronomy in the USA)
- **Walkers:** Wild West Tombstone excursion with local guide: Tombstone Courthouse State Historic Park Museum, Bird Cage Theater, and Rose Tree Museum
- **Walkers:** Downtown Tucson Walk
- **Relax & Ride:** Sabino Canyon Crawler Tour
- **Relax & Ride:** Downtown Tucson Guided Bus Tour

- [Book Now](#)
- [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).

[Book Now Contact Us](#)

Important Info



Group Size

As many alumni travelers as we can welcome!



Accommodations

Strategically located Marriott hotel right across from the arboretum campus of the University of Arizona



Meals

Breakfasts included with a welcome dessert and a fun Farewell Dinner. Letters BD indicate which meals are included.



Airfare

Not included. Tucson International Airport (airport code TUS) serves our starting hotel in Tucson. Airport – hotel shuttles are provided on Day 0 (Jan 16), Day 1 (Jan 17), Day 4 (Jan 20), and the Post-day (Jan 21).



Transportation

Included. We use motorcoaches with a seating capacity of 56 seats.



Traveler Age

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

Your Guides

Most, if not all, current members of the WAI guide team are looking forward to hosting you in Tucson. A good representation of former guides also plan to join in in the reunion fun.

See a listing of current guide teams [here](#).

Itinerary

Click on each day for more details. (BD) refers to meals included – Breakfast and Dinner.

[PRE-DAY~January 16: Early arrivals into Tucson, Arizona](#)

Turbocharge your *Tucson Rendezvous* by coming in a day early for more time to connect with walking pals and more opportunities to sample all that tantalizing Tucson has to offer.

A pre-night package at our hotel will be offered in a few weeks.

[Day 1~January 17: Arrive Tucson, Arizona \(Welcome Dessert\)](#)

Today we arrive in vibrant Tucson. Travelers who choose to come a day early can take advantage of a variety of optional excursions. This evening, we'll kick things off with our **Sweet Sonoran Welcome**, featuring a delicious dessert reception.

A full slate of optional activities are available both today and on January 20 for those travelers who wish to stay a day later. Participation in some activities preclude participation in others. Pricing on all optional activities will be available by the end of July.

Wild West Tombstone Excursion

Journey to historic Tombstone with a local guide, including stops at the Courthouse Museum, the Rose Tree Museum (home of the world's largest rosebush), and the famous Bird Cage Theatre. On the way back to Tucson, enjoy a guided tour of the stunning San Xavier del Bac Mission.

Kartchner Caverns Deep Cave Visit

Explore the awe-inspiring Kartchner Caverns State Park, touring either the Big Room or the Rotunda/Throne Room with a knowledgeable park guide.

Tucson Guided Walking Tour (10K)

Explore Tucson on foot with this engaging walk through the colorful downtown area, the historic Barrio Viejo, and segments of the Turquoise Trail, connected by a fun ride on the Sun Link streetcar.

Mt. Lemmon Scenic Vistas Excursion

Take a drive up Mt. Lemmon, enjoying fantastic viewpoints overlooking Tucson, the Sonoran Desert, and the Santa Catalina Mountains. Along this approximately 24-mile route, travelers experience a striking transition through multiple climate zones and ecosystems—a change often compared to driving from Mexico to Canada in just an hour. Includes fun and scenic stops along the way.

Hot Air Balloon Tucson Panoramas

Float over the Sonoran Desert for a breathtaking bird's-eye view, complete with a champagne toast. Your flight may skim just feet above the desert floor for wildlife viewing, then soar thousands of feet up to reveal sweeping views of distant cities and lakes.

Tucson Guided Bus Tour

Orient yourself to Tucson with this guided city tour, featuring informative stops to introduce you to its history, culture, and unique charm.

Flavors of Tucson

Experience Tucson's UNESCO-recognized culinary scene with a food tour that lets you taste your way through this vibrant city. One of our favorite ways to truly get to know a place!

Sabino Canyon Crawler Excursion

Relax on a one-hour round-trip tour aboard the Sabino Canyon Crawler, traveling 7.4 miles through gorgeous desert scenery with recorded commentary and hop-on, hop-off stops along the route.

University of Arizona Walk (5K)

Enjoy a self-guided stroll through the beautiful and historic University of Arizona campus.

[Day 2~January 18: Activities from Tucson \(B\)](#)

Saguaro National Park East Walk ~ 5-6 km, rated 2B

Today we visit Old Tucson Studios, which has served as the filming location for over 500 films and television shows since it was built in 1939 for the movie *Arizona* (1940). As one of the few remaining Western movie sets, it offers a fascinating glimpse into this iconic film genre. Our knowledgeable local guide will share entertaining trivia, humor, and regional history during our visit.

After experiencing life on a Wild West set, we'll continue to Saguaro National Park East for a beautiful walk among its towering cacti and stunning desert landscapes. We'll then return to Tucson for a guided city bus tour, featuring informative stops that showcase the city's rich history, vibrant culture, and unique Southwestern charm.

Relax & Ride Itinerary

Perfect for anyone seeking lighter activity, with options that involve minimal walking.

Get ready for a Wild West adventure to Tombstone, complete with insightful commentary from our local guide. We'll visit the Courthouse Museum, where a knowledgeable docent provides an engaging introduction, then enjoy a leisurely stroll through this historic town to see the Rose Tree Museum—home to the world's largest rosebush—and the famous Bird Cage Theatre.

After free time for lunch, we make our way back to Tucson with a final stop at beautiful San Xavier del Bac Mission. Known as the "White Dove of the Desert," this stunning 18th-century Spanish Catholic mission was founded by Father Kino in 1692 and built in its current form between 1783 and 1797. It remains an active parish for the Tohono O'odham people and is celebrated for its exquisite Baroque architecture, vibrant interior artwork, and profound cultural significance in the region.

[Day 3~January 19: Activities from Tucson \(BD\)](#)

Sabino Canyon Walk – 5 km, 2A

Today we enjoy a scenic walk through the breathtaking Sabino Canyon, a desert oasis nestled in the Santa Catalina Mountains, renowned for its dramatic rock formations, seasonal waterfalls, and diverse wildlife. The paved nature trail crosses Sabino Creek several times via charming stone bridges constructed during the Depression era by WPA and CCC teams.

Following our hike, we visit the extraordinary Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum, a unique blend of wildlife menagerie, botanical garden, and natural history museum.

After a full day of discovery, we'll return to our hotel with ample time to relax and prepare for tonight's dinner event.

Relax & Ride Itinerary

Perfect for anyone seeking lighter activity, with options that involve minimal walking.

Old Tucson Studios has served as the filming location for over 500 films and television shows since it was built in 1939 for the movie *Arizona* (1940). As one of the few remaining Western movie sets, it offers a fascinating glimpse into this iconic film genre.

Our knowledgeable local guide shares entertaining trivia, humor, and regional history during our visit.

After experiencing life on a Wild West set, we continue deeper into the desert to explore the exceptional Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum, a fascinating fusion of wildlife menagerie, botanical garden, and natural history museum. After a full day of exploration, we'll return to our hotel with plenty of time to unwind and prepare for our dinner event this evening.

Southwest Soirée with El Charro

Our group dinner is at the Carriage House, part of the renowned El Charro Café—the oldest Mexican restaurant in the United States continuously operated by the same family. With its rich culinary heritage and vibrant Southwestern flavors, El Charro's cuisine provides the perfect complement to our unforgettable celebration this evening.

[Day 4~January 20: Depart for home; activities for Post-day travelers \(B\)](#)

Thank you for being part of this special event!

37 years of exploring the planet together has been a life-changing experience. Dan Friesen and current and former members of the WAI team are counting the days until our farewell reunion at the *Tucson Rendezvous*!

Meanwhile, we are full of anticipation for how WAI will grow and develop under new leadership and a faithful team of veteran guide teams.

Airport transfers are provided for travelers departing today.

Extend Your Adventure

Those wishing to explore more of this vibrant city may participate today in the same optional excursions offered on Day 1. An add-on package and extra night at our hotel will be offered in a few weeks.

Wild West Tombstone Excursion

Journey to historic Tombstone with a local guide, including stops at the Courthouse Museum, the Rose Tree Museum (home of the world's largest rosebush), and the famous Bird Cage Theatre. On the way back to Tucson, enjoy a guided tour of the stunning San Xavier del Bac Mission.

Kartchner Caverns Deep Cave Visit

Explore the awe-inspiring Kartchner Caverns State Park, touring either the Big Room or the Rotunda/Throne Room with a knowledgeable park guide.

Tucson Guided Walking Tour (10K)

Explore Tucson on foot with this engaging walk through the colorful downtown area, the historic Barrio Viejo, and segments of the Turquoise Trail, connected by a fun ride on the Sun Link streetcar.

Mt. Lemmon Scenic Vistas Excursion

Take a drive up Mt. Lemmon, enjoying fantastic viewpoints overlooking Tucson, the Sonoran Desert, and the Santa Catalina Mountains. Along this approximately 24-mile route, travelers experience a striking transition through multiple climate zones and ecosystems—a change often compared to driving from Mexico to Canada in just an hour. Includes fun and scenic stops along the way.

Hot Air Balloon Tucson Panoramas

Float over the Sonoran Desert for a breathtaking bird's-eye view, complete with a champagne toast. Your flight may skim just feet above the desert floor for wildlife viewing, then soar thousands of feet up to reveal sweeping views of distant cities and lakes.

Tucson Guided Bus Tour

Orient yourself to Tucson with this guided city tour, featuring informative stops to introduce you to its history, culture, and unique charm.

Flavors of Tucson

Experience Tucson's UNESCO-recognized culinary scene with a food tour that lets you taste your way through this vibrant city. One of our favorite ways to truly get to know a place!

Sabino Canyon Crawler Excursion

Relax on a one-hour round-trip tour aboard the Sabino Canyon Crawler, traveling 7.4 miles through gorgeous desert scenery with recorded commentary and hop-on, hop-off stops along the route.

University of Arizona Walk (5K)

Enjoy a self-guided stroll through the beautiful and historic University of Arizona campus.

[POST-DAY~January 21: Post-day travelers depart for home \(B\)](#)

Airport transfers are provided today for travelers who opted to add another day at the *Tucson Rendezvous*.

Before You Book

Click on each heading for more details.

[How Do I Lock in My Place on This Adventure?](#)

To register, a non-refundable \$500 deposit is required to hold your spot. A final payment is due 90 days before departure and is non-refundable after the due date. You will receive a prompt email from us 2 to 3 weeks in advance.

Sometime in August, an “Adventure Advice” email will be sent with critical information on flight arrangements as well as important steps to take in the months before your trip. Please do not buy your airline tickets until you review this Adventure Advice email.

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

[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 call our office at 1.360.260.9393.

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 on the table below:

INCLINE

1. Minimal hills or stair climbing. Cumulative elevation gain: <200 feet.
2. Some moderate hills and stair climbing. Cumulative elevation gain: 200-1000 feet.
3. Some significant hill or stair climbing. Cumulative elevation gain: 1000-2000 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).

[How Is Airfare Arranged?](#)

The official start and finish point for this Adventure is the Tucson International Airport (airport code TUS). WAI guides will greet you after you claim luggage and direct you to our

transfer bus which will deliver you to our hotel just a block away from the lovely grounds of the University of Arizona. At our hotel, other WAI team members will help you check in and get oriented to the area.

We recommend that you contact Laura Pfahler, the travel agent we work with, to help book your flight arrangements. In this age of airfare complications and airport uncertainty, using a travel agent is a good investment!

More details about flight arrangements and travel agent contact information will be provided in an Adventure Advice PDF by email after you register for the Adventure. Please do not book your airfare prior to receiving these flight details from us!

- Laura Pfahler: 503.434.6401 or llp@wtpdx.com

[Travel Insurance](#)

WAI recommends travel insurance for financial and medical protection from any number of unforeseen circumstances that can arise before departure or during your Adventure. Many travel insurance providers are available for you to consider. Laura Pfahler and Sharon Mitchell of World Travel Inc. can provide travel insurance options for your WAI tour, as well as for your airfare. For those who purchase airfare through Laura, purchasing your travel insurance from her colleague, Sharon Mitchell, may be the simplest option.

Be aware that some travel insurance policies contain time-sensitive provisions (i.e. some benefits, such as coverage of pre-existing conditions, are available only if the policy is purchased within a certain number of days of the purchase of the travel package). In addition, remember that airfare is not covered by any travel insurance policy you may have purchased for the tour.

Check out [Insurance Tips](#) from World Travel for a short introduction to travel insurance.

Sharon Mitchell: 971-261-2091 or smitchell@wtpdx.com

Other options include:

- Allianz
- Betins
- Travel Guard
- Travel Insured International

Using the [SquareMouth.com](https://www.squaremouth.com) website can be a good way to compare pricing.

NOTE: WAI receives no commission or financial remuneration from World Travel Inc. In addition, WAI bears no responsibility for travel insurance benefits advertised by various credit card companies. If you are relying on this type of benefit for insurance, we advise you to verify coverage types and limits and that your purchase does in fact qualify you for this

insurance.

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.

[Wellness Policies For This Tour](#)

Our approach to wellness on tour has traditionally been to encourage travelers to:

- Focus on health before the tour so you start healthy.
- Pace yourself while on tour; travel is inherently stimulating and can produce adrenalin boosts that mask energy drain. Guard your energy reserves and consider the length of the trip and whether to opt out of some activities and/or walks.
- Be self-aware. If you feel yourself tiring or feel a bug coming on, take precautions to block it (e.g. extra rest, extra doses of vitamin C, etc).
- If you feel a bug coming on or if you take ill, distance yourself from others when possible.
- If you feel ill, isolate yourself towards the back of the bus and away from others and please wear a mask.

Click [WAI Wellness on Tour Policy](#) to view the WAI policy on Wellness on Tour.

[What Happens Next?](#)

Later, in August, an “Adventure Advice” email will be sent with critical information on flight arrangements. Please do not buy your airline tickets until you review this Adventure Advice email.

A final payment is due 90 days before departure and is non-refundable after the due date. You will receive a prompt email from us a week or two in advance. Please see our [General Tour Conditions](#) for the full terms and conditions for participation in this Adventure.

About 2 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.

We look forward to connecting at *Tucson Rendezvous*, renewing walking friendships from the past and meeting the new WAI 2.0 team that will carry the Walking Adventures vision into the future!