

Things to do in Tucson:

Consider staying a few extra days in Tucson to take in some of the area attractions. The resort will have additional ideas and information about things to do in the area, but here is a list of local favorites to whet your palate.

Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum – Don't miss our group outing on Saturday evening! This is a must-see in Tucson and an excellent introduction to the flora and fauna of the Sonoran Desert. <http://www.desertmuseum.org/>

Reid Park Zoo – A small zoo, definitely worth a visit. The zoo is located in central Tucson off 22nd Street, just west of Alvernon Road within the larger Gene C. Reid Park. Open daily 9-4; Admission \$7. www.tucsonzoo.org

Mission San Xavier del Bac – The Mission was founded before 1700, and the Franciscans completed the present structure in 1797. It is currently an active church and school in the Tohono O'odham Indian Reservation. The structure is an impressive example of Spanish mission architecture with domes, carvings, arches, flying buttresses, as well as ornate interior murals and carved altars. The Mission is located 9 miles south of Tucson off I-19 exit 92, on San Xavier Road in the Tohono O'odham Indian Reservation. Open daily 8-5; visit by donation. www.sanxaviermission.org

Tucson Botanical Gardens – 5 acres of many types of gardens, including cactus and succulents, Native American crops, bird and butterfly gardens, and a water harvesting system. Located in central Tucson at 2150 North Alvernon Way. Open 8:30-4:30 daily. \$7 admission. www.tucsonbotanical.org

Flandrau Science Center and Planetarium – Interactive science exhibits about sound, light, optical illusions, magnetism and astronomy. Exhibits highlight the research from the world-class optics program at the University of Arizona. The planetarium presents science, cultural, astronomy and laser light shows. A 16-inch telescope is available for night viewing in the public observatory. Located at 1601 E. University Blvd on the U of A campus. Check website for hours and admission: <http://www.flandrau.org/>

Tohono Chul Park – This park is a 49-acre desert preserve located just 1.3 miles from Westward Look! In addition to short interpretive nature trails, it also has a Geology Wall, a Children's Garden, a greenhouse, and changing art exhibits. Features educational exhibits on water conservation, arid lands, and the traditions and cultures of the Southwest. Open daily 9-5. Admission \$5. <http://www.tohonochulpark.org/wordpress/>

Hiking:

Saguaro National Park – Features forests of the impressive Saguaro cactus, which are unique to the region. There are two sites of SNP – East and West districts flanking either side of Tucson. Both have excellent hiking trails (165 miles in the two districts combined) and visitor centers. The parks are open from

7 AM to sunset. Because SNP is at low elevation and it will be hot in August, an early morning or evening hike is recommended. Visitor centers are open 9-5. Admission to the park is \$10. Highly recommended!

<http://www.nps.gov/sagu/index.htm>

Olav Oftedal came to know Saguaro National Park well while studying desert tortoises there. He has offered to set up a tour of the park the morning of August 11th for those delegates who are interested in joining him. If you are interested, please contact Olav at oftedalo@si.edu.

Sabino Canyon – A more developed desert experience, complete with narrated shuttle bus excursions but also lots of great hiking trails from easy to strenuous. About 12 miles east of Westward Look. \$5 parking fee.

<http://www.fs.fed.us/r3/coronado/forest/recreation/camping/sites/sabino.shtml>

Catalina State Park – Beautiful trails of many lengths and difficulties heading up the backside of the Santa Catalina Mountains. Just 8.5 miles north of Westward Look. See website for details: <http://azstateparks.com/parks/cata/index.html>

Mount Lemmon – Mount Lemmon is the largest peak (9157 ft) in the Santa Catalina Mountains, which form the northern boundary of Tucson. It is about a 20-mile drive east from Westward Look to the base of the mountain, and then a beautiful 25-mile drive to the top. This drive starts in a typical Sonoran desert landscape with towering Saguaro cactus, but then passes through stands of oak, juniper and pinyon pine, and finally into tall stands of fir and aspen. Mount Lemmon is considered a “sky island” on which live plant and animal species unique to surrounding area. It is also 20 degrees F cooler at the top of the mountain than the base, making it a great Tucson summer destination and your best bet for a day-long hike. With excellent hiking and mountain biking trails abounding along the highway, Mount Lemmon is well worth the trip.