

WELCOME

Welcome to Greater Phoenix, America’s sunniest destination.

What sets Phoenix apart from every other big city in the United States is its lush Sonoran Desert scenery. Phoenix is surrounded on all sides by mountains, and the sun shines during 85 percent of daylight hours.

Phoenix has more acreage of parks and preserves than any other major destination in the U.S., and visitors can explore all this glorious public land via hundreds of miles of trails.

If your most memorable travel experiences tend to occur outdoors, with the sun on your shoulders and dirt beneath your feet, then you’re in the right place. This guide will help you choose trails that best suit you, and provide tips to help keep you prepared and safe.

Have a wonderful time on the trail.



SAFETY TIPS

Most of the mountain parks and preserves in Greater Phoenix are undeveloped Sonoran Desert areas. Hikers may encounter rocky terrain, rattlesnakes, bees and other hazards native to this ecosystem. These safety tips are crucial to read before embarking on a hike in the desert.

- Drink plenty of water. Bring at least 1 quart for short hikes, and 3–5 quarts for daylong hikes. When you’ve consumed half of your water, turn around.
- Make sure someone knows where you’ll be hiking and when you expect to return.
- Hike with a friend. It’s safer ... and more fun.
- During hot-weather months, hike in the early morning or near dusk. Full-sun temperatures can be up to 20 degrees higher than the “official” temperature.
- On the hottest summer days, consider whether it’s safe to hike at all. Remember: Even if you are hydrated, you can still suffer from heat-related illness.
- Dogs are prohibited on City of Phoenix hiking trails when the temperature is 100 degrees or warmer.
- Wear appropriate footwear, preferably hiking boots or closed-toe trail shoes. Leave the sandals at home.
- Wear light-colored, comfortable clothing.
- Wear a hat and sunscreen (SPF 15 minimum).
- Bring a basic first-aid kit.
- Avoid putting your hands and feet anywhere you cannot see.
- Carry a cellphone at all times.

WHAT TO DO WHEN YOU NEED HELP

If you encounter an emergency on the trail, follow the “S.T.O.P.” protocol: Stop, Think, Observe, Plan. In a crisis, it is important to remember your brain is your No. 1 survival tool.

- If you are lost or injured, do not panic.
- If you need help in an emergency, call 9-1-1.
- Know your location. Look for the nearest trail marker or any noticeable landmark, such as a bench, wash or tree.
- Identify the emergency situation. Be specific regarding the condition of an injured person.



@jacquelinehurst at Phoenix Mountain Preserve Trail #300 (Summit/Piestewa Peak)

TRAIL ETIQUETTE

Public lands are shared places, and many of Phoenix’s trails attract heavy use. It’s important to respect the environment and be mindful of fellow hikers.

- Always stay on designated trails. Phoenix city ordinances prohibit trailblazing.
- Use common sense and courtesy when sharing the trail with others. In general, bike riders yield to both hikers and horseback riders; hikers yield to horseback riders. Downhill hikers yield to uphill hikers.



- Announce your intentions and slow your pace when passing someone on the trails.
- Do not litter. Leave No Trace. Pack it in, pack it out.
- Take only photos, leave only footprints.
- Do not deface, destroy or remove plants, animals, rock art, historical markers or geological sites.
- Look and observe, BUT DO NOT TOUCH! Preserve petroglyphs/pictographs by not touching them in any way. Even a small amount of the oils from hands can darken petroglyphs making them impossible to see.

Source: City of Phoenix Parks and Recreation

SEASONS

Mother Nature smiles on some cities more than others. Phoenix, obviously, is blessed in the sunshine department.

Phoenix basks in sunshine more than any other major metropolitan area in the U.S. — during 85 percent of its daylight hours. And the cliché that “it’s a dry heat” rings true: Humidity levels are pleasantly low, even in summer.

The bottom line: Any time is a good time to visit the Sonoran Desert.

WINTER

During the winter months Greater Phoenix enjoys blue skies and highs in the 60s and 70s. Winter nights in the desert can get chilly, though the temperature rarely dips below freezing.

SPRING

Phoenix’s weather is consistently perfect during springtime. Daytime temperatures hover around 80 degrees, while evenings are comfortably cool. Spring is when hikers hit the trails to see blooming cactuses and wildflowers, and baseball fans flock to stadiums across the metro area for Cactus League Spring Training.

SUMMER

Summertime temps routinely reach triple digits, but a 100-degree day in the desert actually feels much more pleasant than an 85-degree day in a locale with heavy humidity. The best thing about summer in Phoenix: It’s value season. Prices at resorts, hotels and golf courses plunge as much as 50 percent.

FALL

Autumn days in Phoenix are warm, sunny and exceedingly pleasant. It’s a great time for recreational pursuits, off-season sunbathing and serious shopping. Nights can get cool, but patio dining and outdoor events are still comfortable.



@calla_the_explora at McDowell Sonoran Preserve

AVERAGE PHOENIX TEMPERATURES

	HIGH (°F/°C)	LOW (°F/°C)
January	67/19	44/7
February	71/22	48/9
March	76/24	52/11
April	85/29	58/14
May	94/34	67/19
June	104/40	76/24
July	106/41	82/28
August	104/40	81/27
September	99/37	75/24
October	88/31	63/17
November	75/24	50/10
December	67/19	44/7
Average	86/30	62/17

PHOENIX
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PHOENIX TRAIL GUIDE

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EXPERT PICKS

Greater Phoenix is similar in size to the state of Delaware, and its landscape gives rise to nine mountain chains. To help you choose among the region’s innumerable trails, we asked professional guides from some of the city’s top outfitters to share a few of their favorite hikes.

EASY

Lower Salt River Nature Trail, Phon D Sutton Recreation Area

This interpretive trial is great for families and birdwatchers. It skirts the Salt River’s lush riparian zone and gives hikers plenty of opportunities to see wildlife (including wild horses). Length: 2.3 miles (loop)

Waterfall Trail, White Tank Mountain Regional Park

This well-maintained trail on Phoenix’s northwest flank takes hikers past an amazing display of ancient Hohokam petroglyphs en route to a seasonal waterfall—a rare site in a desert canyon. Length: 2.0 miles (out and back)



@chelsc_rose at Waterfall Trail

GUIDED TOURS

A great way to learn more about the human and natural history of Arizona’s wild places is to take a guided hiking tour. Local outfitters offer on-trail excursions across the state, from day hikes in Phoenix to multiday trips to the bottom of the Grand Canyon.



@drnaylin at Tom’s Thumb Trail

MODERATE

Hidden Valley Loop via Mormon Trail, South Mountain Park

This popular hike near downtown Phoenix offers views of the city and Camelback Mountain before looping through a sand-floored “hidden” basin and a rock tunnel called “Fat Man’s Pass.” Length: 4.0 miles (out and back)

Butcher Jones Trail, Saguaro Lake

This trail winds along the shoreline of Saguaro Lake, passing through a mesquite bosque and several fishing coves. Summer brings crowds to the lake, but is also the season for a post-hike swim. Length: 5.0 miles (out and back)

CHALLENGING

Flatiron, Superstition Wilderness Area

This 4,800-foot peak is accessed via a steep, rocky ascent of Siphon Draw Trail. The rugged climb rewards hikers with one of the best 360-degree views in the region. Length: 6.0 miles (out and back)

Tom’s Thumb Trail, McDowell Sonoran Preserve

Tom’s Thumb is an iconic landmark in the McDowell Mountains. The trail to it climbs steadily through a dramatic boulder field that’s blanketed by wildflowers in spring. Length: 4.6 miles (out and back)

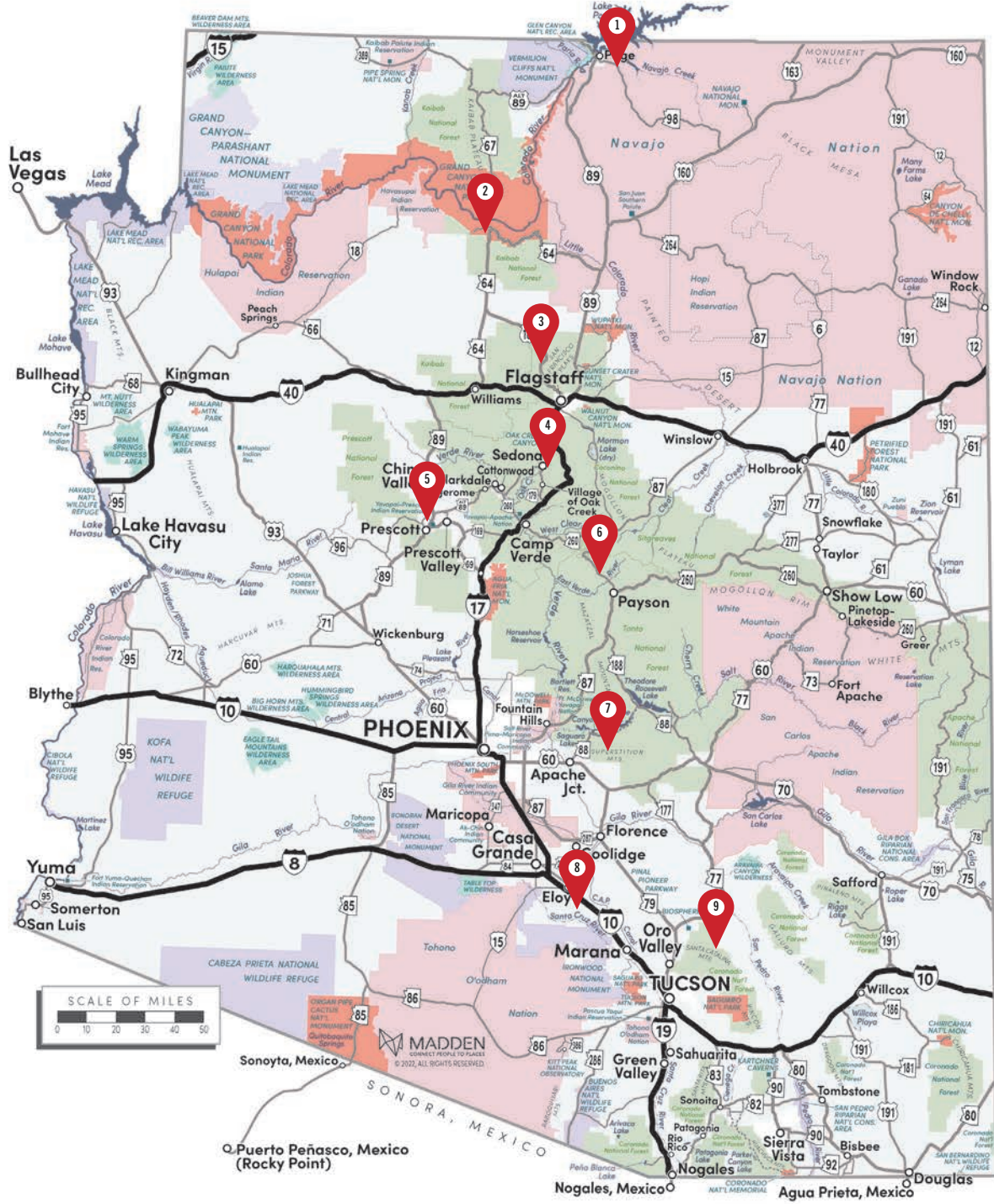
360 Adventures
480-722-0360
360-adventures.com

Arizona Scenic Tours
800-724-1251
arizonascenictours.co

REI Co-op Adventure Center–Arizona
866-455-1601
destinations.rei.com/arizona

Wild Bunch Desert Guides
602-663-0842
www.wildbunchdesertguides.com

ARIZONA



MUST-SEE AZ

Phoenix is the jumping-off point to several hiking and sightseeing destinations across the Grand Canyon State.



Antelope Canyon, Page
antelopecanyon.com



Grand Canyon National Park
nps.gov/grca



Mount Humphreys, Flagstaff
fs.usda.gov/coconino



Devil’s Bridge Trail No. 120, Sedona
fs.usda.gov/coconino



Watson Lake, Prescott
prescott-az.gov



Tonto Natural Bridge, Payson
azstategparks.com/tonto



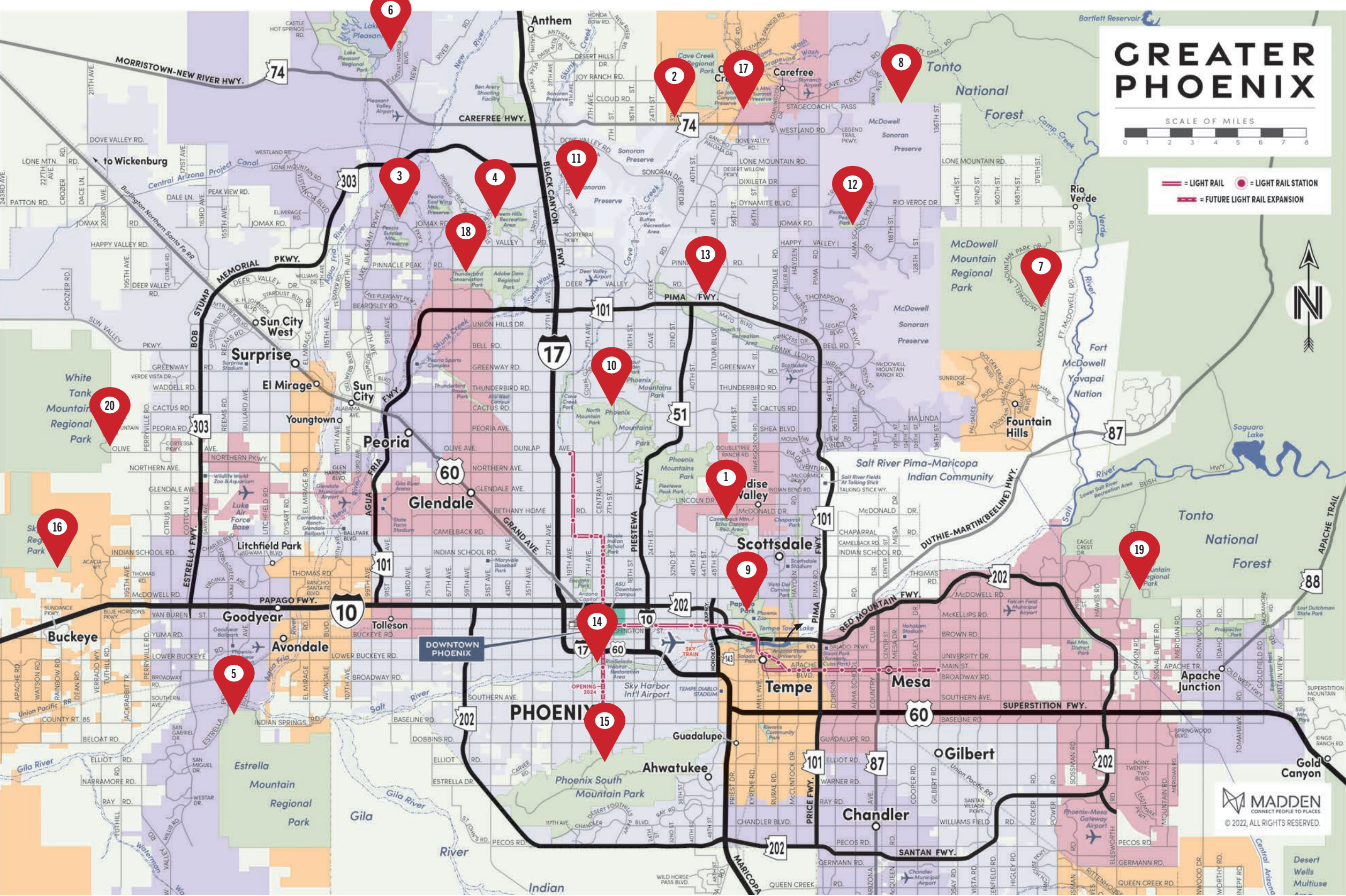
Siphon Draw Trail, Superstition Wilderness Area
azstategparks.com/lost-dutchman



Picacho Peak, Tucson
azstategparks.com/picacho



Mount Lemmon, Tucson
fs.usda.gov/coronado








































GREATER PHOENIX TRAILS

















































Hike Bike Dog-Friendly Horse-Friendly ADA-Compliant















































Park/Preserve	Level of Difficulty	Hike	Bike	Dog-Friendly	Horse-Friendly	ADA-Compliant	Length (miles)
1 Camelback Mountain (McDonald Drive & Tatum Boulevard) For additional trails, go to phoenix.gov/parks/trails/locations							
Bobby's Rock Loop	Easy	X					0.2
Cholla	Moderate/Intermediate	X					1.5
Echo Canyon Trail	Moderate/Intermediate	X					1.2
2 Cave Creek Regional Park (32nd Street & Carefree Highway) For additional trails, go to maricopacountyparks.net							
Overton	Difficult/Strenuous	X	X	X	X		2.1
Quartz	Difficult/Strenuous	X	X	X	X		1.4
Slate	Easy	X	X	X	X		1.6
3 City of Peoria Trail System (Multiple trailheads, Westwing Parkway & Lake Pleasant Parkway) peoriaaz.gov/home/showpublisheddocument/776							
Calderwood Butte	Difficult/Strenuous	X	X	X	X		1.5
East Wing Mountain	Difficult/Strenuous	X	X	X	X		2.1
Sunrise Mountain	Difficult/Strenuous	X	X	X	X		4.5
West Wing Mountain	Moderate/Intermediate	X	X	X	X		3.4
4 Deem Hills Recreation Area (51st Avenue & Deem Hills Parkway) For additional trails, go to phoenix.gov/parks/trails/locations							
Deem Hills Circumference	Difficult/Strenuous	X	X	X	X		5.7
Palisades Trail/Water Tank Road	Difficult/Strenuous	X	X	X	X		1.5
Deem Hills Ridgeline Trail	Moderate/Intermediate	X	X	X	X		1.5
5 Estrella Mountain Regional Park (Estrella Parkway & Vineyard Avenue) For additional trails, go to maricopacountyparks.net							
Butterfield (Front)	Easy	X	X	X	X		0.8
Coldwater	Difficult/Strenuous	X	X	X	X		2.9
Dysart	Easy	X	X	X	X		1.9
Quail	Moderate/Intermediate	X	X	X	X		1.0
6 Lake Pleasant Regional Park (N Castle Hot Springs Road & Lake Pleasant Access Road) For additional trails, go to maricopacountyparks.net							
Yavapai Point	Easy	X		X			1.5
7 McDowell Mountain Regional Park (McDowell Mountain Road & McDowell Mountain Park Drive) For additional trails, go to maricopacountyparks.net							
Bluff	Difficult/Strenuous	X	X	X	X		2.2
















Level of Difficulty*: Easy = Moderate/Intermediate = Difficult/Strenuous

GREATER PHOENIX TRAILS

Park/Preserve	Level of Difficulty						Length (miles)
Delsie		X	X	X	X		2.5
Escondido		X	X	X	X		6.2
Granite		X	X	X	X		3.5
Lariat		X	X	X	X		1.5
Pemberton		X	X	X	X		15.3
Scenic		X	X	X	X		3.5
Shallmo Wash		X	X	X	X		1.7
Stoneman Wash		X	X	X	X		4.3
Tonto Tank		X	X	X	X		2.7
Verde		X	X	X			1.2
Wagner		X	X	X			1.1
 McDowell Sonoran Preserve (multiple trailheads see below) scottsdaleaz.gov/preserve/trail-maps							
Brown's Ranch Trailhead (N Alma School Rd. & Dynamite Blvd.)	 - 	X	X	X	X	X	see website for trails
Fraesfield Trailhead (E Rio Verde Dr. & 132nd St.)	 - 	X	X	X	X		see website for trails
Gateway Trailhead (N Thompson Peak Pkwy. & E Bell Rd.)	 - 	X	X	X	X	X	see website for trails
Granite Mountain Trailhead (E Lone Mountain Rd. & N 136th St.)	 - 	X	X	X	X		see website for trails
Lost Dog Wash Trailhead (N 124th St. & E Via Linda)	 / 	X	X	X	X		see website for trails
Quartz Trailhead (N Thompson Peak Pkwy. & N Frank Lloyd Wright Blvd.)		X	X	X	X		see website for trails
Ringtail Trailhead (N 128th St. & E Cactus Rd.)	 / 	X	X	X	X		see website for trails
Sunrise Trailhead (N 145th Way & E Wethersfield Rd.)		X	X	X	X		see website for trails
Tom's Thumb Trailhead <i>(Expert Pick)</i> (N 128th St. & E Pinnacle Peak Rd.)	 - 	X	X	X	X		see website for trails
104th St./Bell Rd. Trailhead		X	X	X	X		see website for trails
 Papago Park (Galvin Parkway & Van Buren Street) For additional trails, go to phoenix.gov/parks/trails/locations							
Hole-in-the-Rock		X		X			0.2
Elliot Ramada Loop		X	X	X	X	X	2.7

Park/Preserve	Level of Difficulty						Length (miles)
Galvin Bikeway		X	X	X	X		1.4
Crosscut		X	X	X	X	X	1.4
Nature Trail		X	X	X	X		0.5
 Phoenix Mountain Preserve (multiple trailheads, North Mountain Visitor Center 7th Street & E Thunderbird Road) For additional trails, go to phoenix.gov/parks/trails/locations							
#1A Perl Charles Memorial	 / 	X	X	X	X		4.8
#8 L.V. Yates Trail	 / 	X	X	X	X		2.5
#8A Quartz Ridge		X	X	X	X		1.7
#60 Maxine Lakin Nature	 / 	X	X	X	X		1.2
#100 Charles M. Christiansen Memorial	 / 	X	X	X	X		10.7
#150 Lookout Mountain Summit	 / 	X		X			0.6
#300 Summit (Piestewa Peak)	 / 	X					1.2
#302 Freedom	 / 	X	X	X	X		3.7
#304 Nature	 / 	X	X	X	X		1.5
#306 Shaw Butte	 / 	X	X	X	X		4.0
#308 Lookout Mountain Circumference	 / 	X	X	X	X		2.6
#312 Shadow Mountain Big Loop	 / 	X	X	X	X		1.6
 Phoenix Sonoran Preserve (Multiple trailheads, Desert Vista: W Jomax Road & N North Valley Parkway) For additional trails, go to phoenix.gov/parks/trails/locations							
Ocotillo Trail (Northern Area)		X	X	X	X		6.3
Ridgeback Trail (Northern Area)		X	X	X	X		1.5
Sidewinder Trail (Northern Area)	 / 	X	X	X	X		7.0
Sonoran Paseo (Northern Area)		X	X	X	X		5.0
Bobcat Trail (Southern Area)		X	X	X	X		1.0
Desert Tortoise Trail (Southern Area)		X	X	X	X		1.1
Dixie Mountain Loop (Southern Area)		X	X	X	X		3.8
Union Peak Trail (Southern Area)	 / 	X	X	X	X		0.5
 Pinnacle Peak Park (E Jomax Road & N Alma School Road) scottsdaleaz.gov/parks/pinnacle-peak-park							
Pinnacle Peak Trail	 / 	X					1.8
 Reach 11 Recreation Area (N Tatum Boulevard & Phoenix Recreation Road) For additional trails, go to phoenix.gov/parks/trails/locations							
Barrier Free Nature Trail		X		X		X	.75

Park/Preserve	Level of Difficulty						Length (miles)
 Rio Salado Habitat Restoration Area (multiple trailheads, Main: NE Central Avenue & Watkins Street) For additional trails, go to phoenix.gov/parks/trails/locations							
North Overbank Trail		X	X	X	X	X	3.7
 South Mountain (multiple trailheads, Main: W Dobbins Road & S Central Avenue) For additional trails, go to phoenix.gov/parks/trails/locations							
Alta	 / 	X	X	X	X		4.8
Bajada		X	X	X	X		3.2
Beverly Canyon		X	X	X	X		1.5
Desert Classic		X	X	X	X		9.0
Geronimo		X	X	X	X		2.5
Hidden Valley <i>(Expert Pick)</i>	 / 	X	X	X	X		0.5
Holbert	 / 	X	X	X	X		2.9
Javelina Canyon	 / 	X	X	X	X		1.7
Judith Tunell Accessible		X		X		X	0.5
Judith Tunell Challenge		X		X		X	0.5
Las Lomitas		X	X	X	X		1.2
Ma Ha Tauk	 / 	X	X	X	X		1.5
Mormon	 / 	X	X	X	X		1.1
National	 / 	X	X	X	X		14.3
Pima East Loop		X	X	X	X		1.5
Pima West Loop		X	X	X	X		2.2
Pyramid	 / 	X	X	X	X		3.0
Ranger	 / 	X	X	X	X		1.6
Telegraph Pass	 / 	X	X	X	X		1.5
 Skyline Regional Park (I-10 and Watson Road) For additional trails, go to skylineregionalpark.com/trails/							
Lost Creek		X	X	X	X		0.3
Mountain Wash		X	X	X	X		1.1
Turnbuckle		X	X	X	X		3.0
Valley Vista		X		X			0.3
Watson Overlook		X		X			0.2
 Spur Cross Ranch Conservation Area (Cave Creek Road & Spur Cross Road) For additional trails, go to maricopacountyparks.net							
Dragonfly		X		X			2.6
Elephant Mountain		X		X	X		2.0

Park/Preserve	Level of Difficulty						Length (miles)
Metate		X		X			0.8
Spur Cross		X	X	X	X		5.2
Tortuga		X		X	X		1.2
 Thunderbird Conservation Park (59th Avenue & W Pinnacle Peak Road) For additional trails, go to glendaleaz.com/Parksandrecreation/ThunderbirdPark.cfm							
Coach Whip		X	X	X	X		5.0
Arrowhead Point	 / 	X	X	X	X		1.5
Cholla Loop	 / 	X	X	X	X		3.0
Sunrise	 / 	X	X	X	X		2.0
Desert Iguana		X	X	X	X		0.8
 Usery Mountain Regional Park (Ellsworth Road & McDowell Road) For additional trails, go to maricopacountyparks.net							
Amigos Wash		X	X	X	X		1.2
Blevins		X	X	X	X		3.0 (RT)
Cat Peaks		X	X	X	X		1.1
Pass Mountain		X	X	X	X		7.5 (RT)
Ruidoso		X	X	X	X		1.3
Vista		X		X			0.5
Wind Cave		X		X			1.5
 White Tank Mountain Regional Park (Olive Avenue & Citrus Road) For additional trails, go to maricopacountyparks.net							
Bajada		X	X	X	X		1.1
Ford Canyon		X	X	X	X		7.4
Ironwood		X	X	X	X		0.9
Mesquite Canyon		X	X	X	X		5.0
Mule Deer (Maricopa Trail)		X	X	X	X		3.4
Waddell		X	X	X	X		1.0
Waterfall <i>(Expert Pick)</i>		X		X			0.9
Wildlife		X	X	X	X		0.2

Level of Difficulty*:  = Easy  = Moderate/Intermediate  = Difficult/Strenuous

 Hike  Bike  Dog-Friendly  Horse-Friendly  ADA-Compliant

*The difficulty level listed for each trail is a subjective guideline based on the average hiker's skill and stamina. Not all trails are listed. Please see park websites for full listings.

