

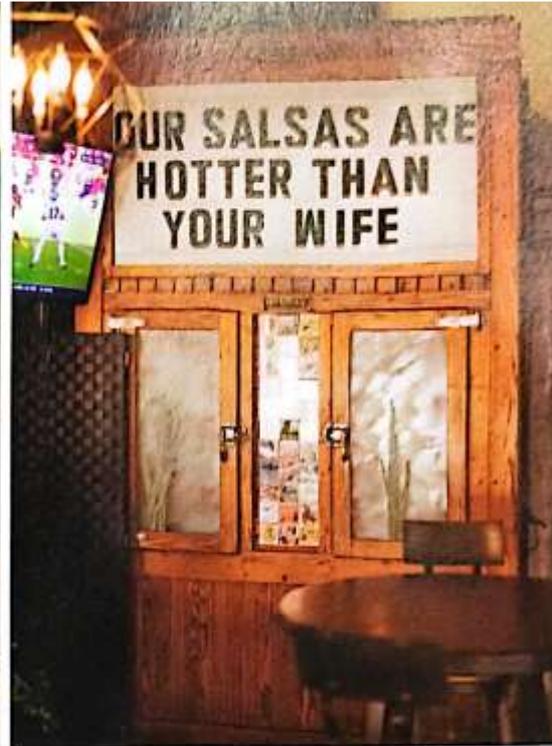
City on the edge

The city of Tucson, Arizona, sits on America's southern border, surrounded by the cactus-strewn landscapes of the Sonoran Desert. Its present-day creativity draws on its Native American and Mexican roots, Spanish colonial heritage and Wild West frontier days

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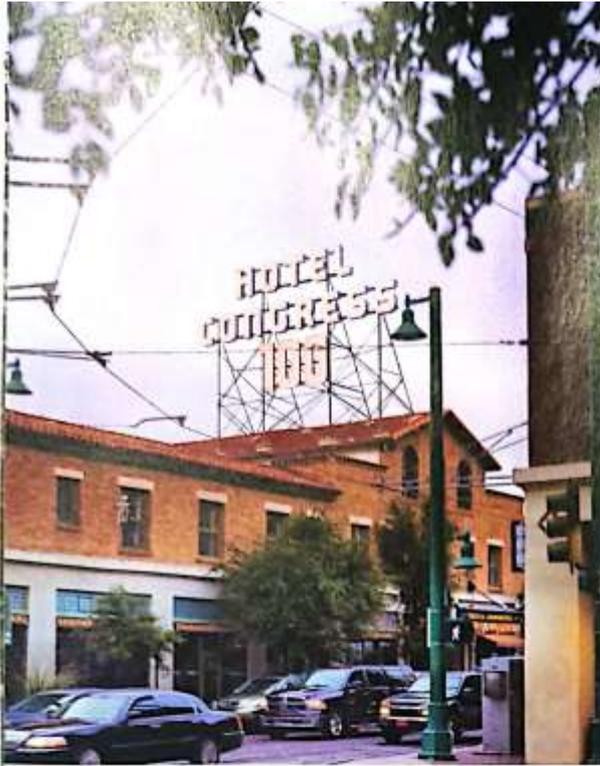




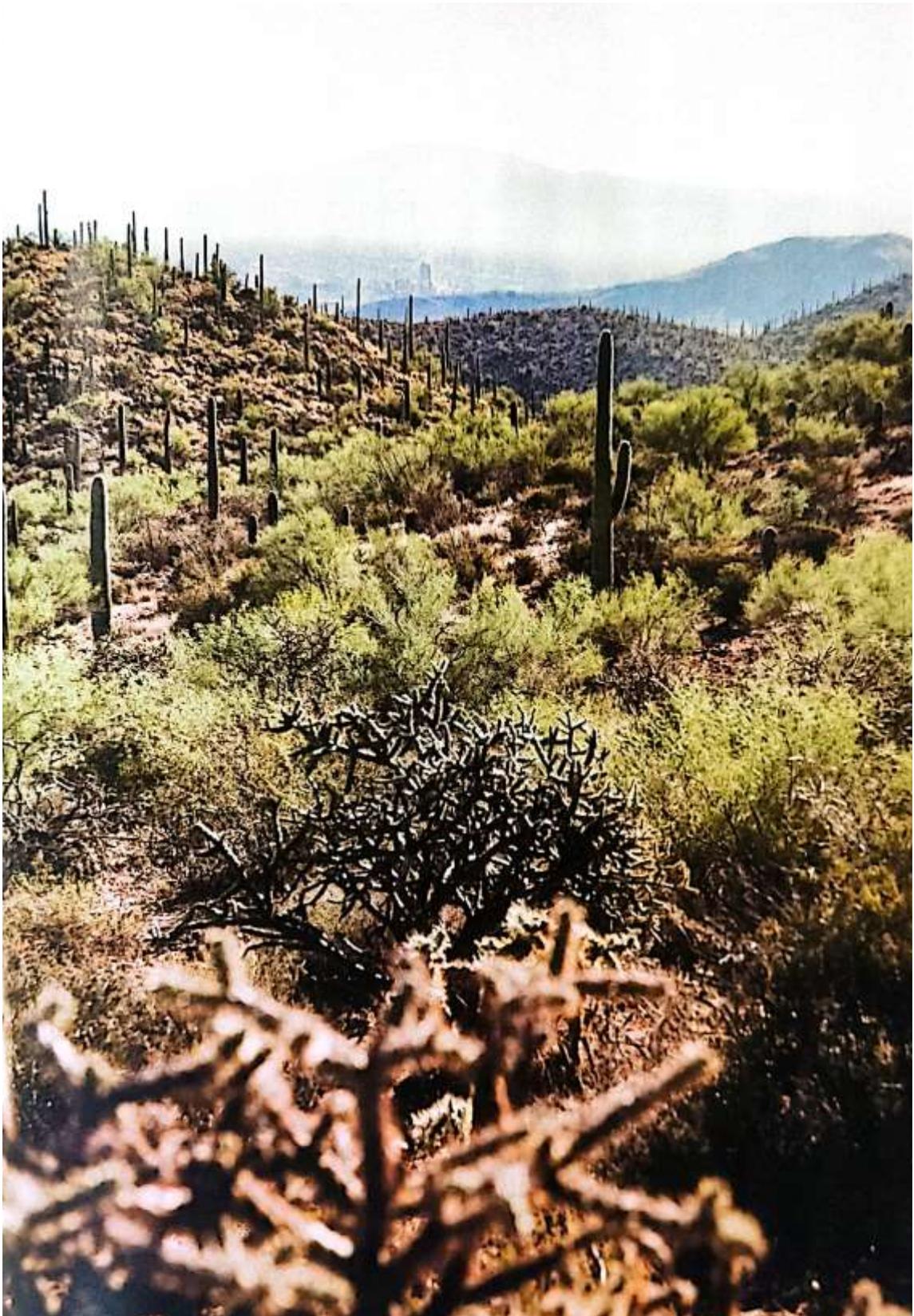


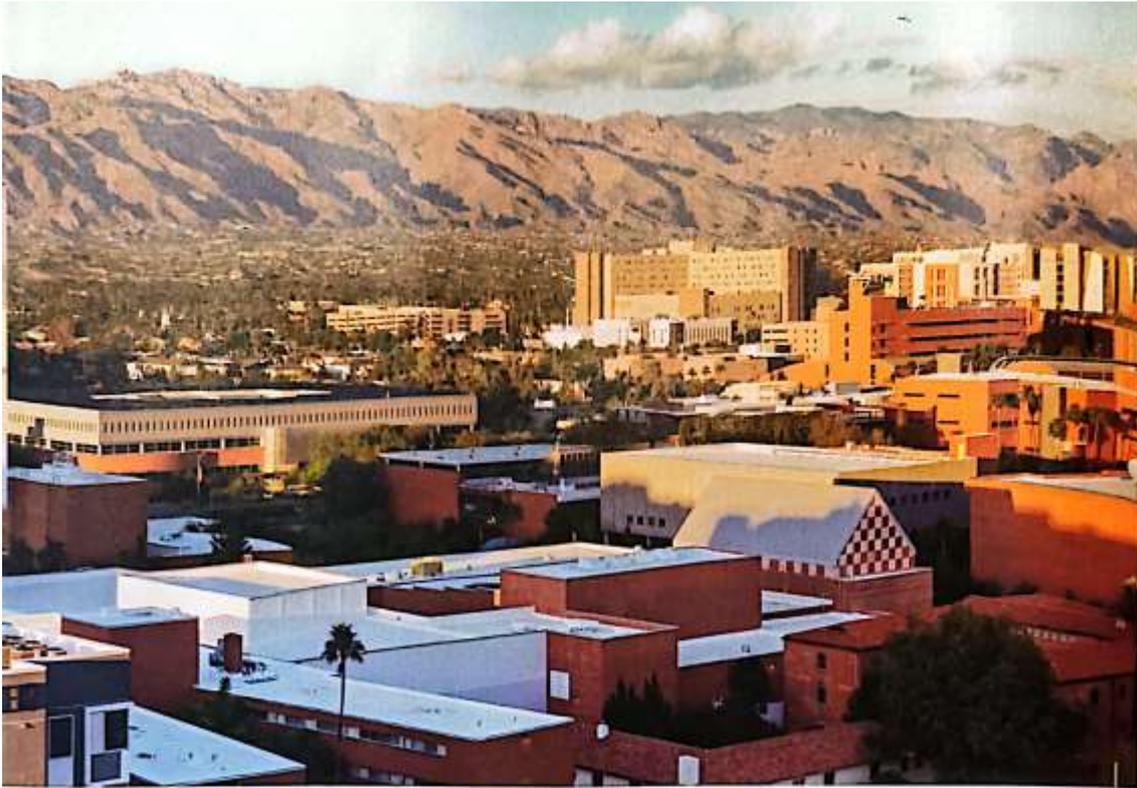
The Sonoran Desert region has been home to Apache and other Native American peoples for centuries, with Spanish colonialists, Mexico and the US fighting for land here in successive waves. In 1854, Mexico sold 30,000 sq miles of the desert to the US, and the border moved from north of Tucson to 60 miles south of it. The desert is the greenest on the planet and sustains two of Arizona's three wine regions. One, Sonoma, is home to the Los Millics Vineyards winery (right). The city, meanwhile, is a canvas for countless street artists, including London-based Fin DAC, whose mural Vergiss adorns the side of Charro Steak & Del Rey restaurant. Tucson is home to some of the borderlands' best Mexican cooking. Seis Kitchen does fine breakfast burritos, while Boca serves *nopales al pastor* tacos — made with grilled prickly pear pads.





The view through the saguaro cactus thickets along the 2.5 mile-long Bowen Trail — one of several paths through the mountains west of the city — reaches past Tumamoc Hill to downtown Tucson. Hidden behind the hill, Sentinel Peak is a basalt mountain, after which the Tohono O'odham people named their original settlement, Cuk Son. At its base, Mission Garden is a living museum that explores the city's history through native flora, as well as plants, shrubs and trees introduced over the centuries from Mexico, Europe and Africa. The garden gets lively at weekends, with workshops, tours and traditional cooking events all taking place. In the heart of downtown Tucson, the Hotel Congress has put up visitors since 1919 — including gangster John Dillinger, who was famously captured there by the FBI in 1934. These days the brave can stay in one of four allegedly haunted rooms, if they dare.





The city's architecture reveals Tucson's varied history, including the Spanish colonial Mission San Xavier del Bac, which dates to the 1700s; the Barrio Viejo's mid-19th century adobes; the 1930s warehouse district, home to much of Tucson's street art; and the contemporary University of Arizona in the north. Beyond the urban skyline, the Santa Catalina Mountains include the highest point in the region, Mount Lemmon (9,170ft), where locals ski in winter and hike in summer amid cool breezes. On warm afternoons, some might head back to Mission Garden for a concert. In the frontier days of the 19th century, when Tucson was a stagecoach stop, people looking for entertainment would improvise with 'cigar-box banjos', recalled today by primitive handmade guitars.

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