

## TAIS Fall Trek Visitor Guide\*

It has been twelve years since TAIS last hosted a Trek. We are delighted to welcome you to the Sonoran Desert and look forward to hosting your visit. To further enhance your experience, we offer a few recommendations for nearby accommodation and attractions:

### **Nearby Hotels**

**Wyndham Grand/Westward Look** 4.4\*\* 🚗 5

245 Ina Rd., Tucson, AZ | 520-297-1151

Features include an on-site restaurant; please note complimentary breakfast is not provided. Located 1.5 miles from Tohono Chul.

**Town Place Suites (Marriott)** 4.3\*\* 🚗 2 0

405 W Rudasill Rd., Tucson, AZ | 520-292-9697

This extended stay property also accommodates guests for one or two nights. Marriott points may be used, and complimentary breakfast is available. Located 2 miles from Tohono Chul.

**La Posada (Choice Brand)** 4.1\*\* 🚗 5

5900 N Oracle Rd., Tucson, AZ | 520-297-1151

Features include an on-site restaurant; complimentary breakfast is provided. Located 2 miles from Tohono Chul.

**3 Palms Tucson North** 4.0\*\* 🚗 5

7401 N Oracle Rd., Tucson, AZ | 520-575-9255

Check Expedia, etc for good prices Located 1 mile from Tohono Chul.

**Best Western** 3.9\*\* 🚗 5

6201 N Oracle Rd., Tucson, AZ | 520-297-8111

Complimentary breakfast and a snack bar. No elevators but ground floor rooms available. Located 2 miles from Tohono Chul.

### **Restaurants**

If you are a foodie, be sure to check out **La Frida Mexican Grill & Seafood**. Chef Claudia Vindiola is a James Beard semifinalist in the 2026 Best Chef: Southwest category. As you can guess, the restaurant is busy. Allow 30 minutes to drive there and plenty of time to wait as there are no reservations. 🚗 3 0

**El Charro Café Downtown** – Home of the very first chimichanga. Authentic Mexican cuisine

Several locations. Original location is downtown on Franklin and Court 🚗 2 0

*\* This file contains a Google Map link that displays every location; you can access it either from this [hyperlink](#) or from the one at the top of the page.*

### **Where do you get your best Sunset photos?**

Arrive at least 30 minutes before sunset which will be at 5:27pm. Bring plenty of water, watch your footing on desert terrain and post sunset colors are spectacular.

**[Picacho State Park](#)** – If your drive east on I-10 takes you near Picacho at sunset, you will get some really nice photos. Park entrance fee of \$10-\$20 🚗 3 7

**[Gates Pass](#)** – Premier Spot. Several different scenic overlooks allow for easy access to sunsets of brilliant shades of orange, pink, and purple with silhouettes of Saguars. **[Tumamoc Hill](#)** – It is a 1.5 mile hike on a paved path. It does get quite steep at the top (about a 700 foot elevation change) but the view is spectacular. A 3-mile round trip. 🚗 30

### **[Saguaro National Park – East or West](#)**

Allow at least 45 minutes to drive to either park entrance. Our National Parks have some of the most spectacular views. Park Entrance fee applies. 🚗 40 (to either park entrance)

### **Do you have an extra day to take in the sights of Tucson?**

**[Biosphere 2](#)** – Do not even consider this a detour – for us gardeners and tree huggers this is a must stop location. A three plus acre living science project. Do not skip the 10-15 minute video. Allow 1.5 – 2 hours to tour. 🚗 35

**[Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum](#)** – an outdoor zoo and botanical garden – allow 3-4 hours 🚗 40 **[Mission San Xavier del Bac](#)** – The mission is open daily. Franciscan Friars hold mass in the historic church at 10am and 12:00 noon on Sunday. There is no A/C or heat so dress accordingly. The photo ops are many, even sunset. 🚗 30

**[Arsarco Mineral Discovery Center and Mine Tours](#)** - Not far from Mission San Xavier del Bac. Reservations and closed toe shoes required for mine tour. 🚗 35

**[Kartchner Caverns State Park](#)** - One of the best caves to explore is in our backyard. Approximately a one hour drive from the Trek venue. As luck would have it, both tours are available in October. The Rotunda/Throne Room has colorful formations, while the Big Room has a “did you see that” ambiance. If you have the time and love caves this is well worth the trip. Do both rooms! 🚗 60

**[Tombstone](#)** – If you’re into old westerns, detour to Tombstone after visiting the caves. Saloons, gun fights and the old cemetery will entertain you. 🚗 90

**[Mt. Lemmon](#)** and **[Kitt Peak](#)** Observatories – no matter where you are take time to look at the stars. The Tucson night sky is amazing. Each observatory offers viewing opportunities. Kitt Peak is 2 hr 37 min drive. Mt. Lemmon is a 🚗 45-90. There is a nice app you can download

for the drive up Mt. Lemmon

[Mirror Lab](#) – Are you really into astronomy? The Mirror Lab offers insights into how those enormous telescopes are made. 🚗 25

[Broadway in Tucson](#) 🚗 1 5 and [The Gaslight Theatre](#) 🚗 3 0 - The Broadway In Tucson is TBD but The Gaslight Theatre will have performances of “Hocus Pocused or Witch Please”

[Rolling Thru Time Auto Museum](#) – Over 250 vehicles for car enthusiasts to view. Firetrucks, Farm Equipment, Muscle Cars, and more. 🚗 3 0

[Arizona History Museum](#) much to see and learn – Geronimo, Wyatt Earp, Underground mine, wagons, and a 1912 Studebaker car. Hours are Tuesday-Saturday 10am – 3pm 🚗 2 0

## | **Gardens and Nurseries**

[Tohono Chul](#) is conveniently located at our Trek event. There is no admission fee for Trek Attendees. As an attendee of the Trek you will have access to the Tohono Chul gardens. If our luck continues, there will be a Saturday evening concert. We are eligible to remain for the concert. Their Desert Corner Nursery has native and arid-adapted plants.

[Tucson Botanical Garden](#) #4 in the nation for Best Botanical Garden in the *USA Today 10Best Readers' Choice Awards* for 2025, for the third year in a row! Tranquility is your reward for visiting. 🚗 15

[Tucson Cactus & Koi](#), [Rillito Nursery and Garden Center](#), as well as [Sunset Nursery](#), are located just a short distance from the Trek.

### **Other nurseries that TAIS members often visit include:**

[Harlow Gardens](#) is where the TAIS rhizome sale takes place, offering beautiful plants, pottery, and garden gifts. 🚗 15

[Four Arrows Garden](#) is widely praised in the community and specializes in succulents, native plants, as well as desert-adapted trees and greenery. It's definitely worth the trip. 🚗 40

[Green Things](#) with its impressive selection of plants, pottery, and overall charm. 🚗 15

[Mesquite Valley Growers](#) remains a top pick among TAIS members. 🚗 25

## **Military Aviation Museums**

[Pima Air and Space Museum](#), including the [390th Memorial Museum](#) featuring the B-17 Flying Fortress. Due to security measures, the Boneyard is permanently closed. 🚗 30

[Titan Missile Museum](#) requires online reservations prior to visiting. On-site ticket purchases do not include access to the underground silo tour. Participation in this tour necessitates the ability to navigate 55 steps, as no elevator is available. 🚗 30

## Hiking Trails and Cycling

**[Sabino Canyon Recreational Park](#)** 🚗 2 0 Visitors may access the canyon via a tram ride, which offers several stops for drop-off and pick-up. The hiking trails vary in difficulty, ranging from easy to challenging. The **[Phoneline](#)** trail presents a moderate hike, requiring agility for descents, while the Sabino Walkway provides an accessible and leisurely stroll.

**[Hope Camp Trail](#)** spans 5.6 miles, beginning at the Loma Alta Trailhead. This route features historical encampments, abandoned windmills, and water towers. It is recommended to allocate over four hours for completion. 🚗 50

**[Signal Hill Petroglyphs](#)** view multiple Native American petroglyphs from the trail 🚗 40

**[The Hugh Norris Trail](#)** is a popular, moderately difficult 9.6 to 9.8-mile round-trip route within Saguaro National Park West. It encompasses steep switchbacks, extensive saguaro forests, and panoramic vistas of the Tucson Mountains. Access is typically from the Hohokam Road trailhead. 🚗 30

**[The Loop](#)** is recognized as the premier bike path in America. Bike rentals are available for those who prefer not to bring their own, and the Tucson Loop is suitable for shared use. 🚗 30

**[Fantasy Island Mountain Bike Park](#)** serves as a well-known local destination for mountain biking enthusiasts. For more advanced cyclists, Mt. Lemmon and Saguaro Park offer challenging routes. 🚗 30