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Palm Springs
CALIFORNIA



The Aerial Tramway is a fun experience.

The Greater Palm Springs region offers a laid-back atmosphere and plenty to do

ALEXANDRA COHEN

FYI

Close your eyes. Imagine a place with palm tree-lined streets, beautiful summer weather in the spring and fall, resorts, golfing, hiking, shopping, and more. For many years, I had heard such wonderful things about The Greater Palm Springs (GPS) region, and when I finally had the opportunity to travel there myself, it absolutely lived up to the hype.

The Greater Palm Springs region encompasses nine cities – Palm Springs itself, as well as Desert Hot Springs, Cathedral City, Rancho Mirage, Palm Desert, Indian Wells, La Quinta, Indio, and Coachella (after which is named perhaps the world's most famous music festival). During our visit, we stayed in Indian Wells, a 30 minute drive from the downtown core of Palm Springs and a 10 to 15 to minute commute to several of the other neighboring cities with their own attractions, including Rancho Mirage, Palm Desert, and La Quinta. The city of Palm Springs offers a laid-back atmosphere with a walkable downtown area, which features a variety of shops, as well as restaurants which often have sprawling patios. Every Thursday, Palm Canyon Drive is closed to vehicular traffic as VillageFest, a street fair, takes over. At the time of our visit, the theme of the night was Halloween, and children and families walked the streets in costume, trick-or-treating at each of the booths.

Things To Do

When you aren't relaxing at a hotel pool or playing a round of golf, there are plenty of other activities to consider during your visit to Palm Springs.

The Palm Springs Aerial Tramway is the world's largest rotating tram car. It travels over two and a half miles along the cliffs of Chino Canyon, carrying you from the Valley Station (elevation of 2,643 ft) to the Mountain Station (elevation of 8,516 ft). The tram car ride in itself offers incredible views of the nearby mountains and the sandy desert, but at the top, you get to explore the wilderness of the Mount San Jacinto State Park, which includes two restaurants, numerous observation decks, a natural history museum, two documentary theatres, a gift shop, and over 50 miles of hiking trails. All of the above are fully wheelchair accessible and ADA compliant, though it is worth noting that the Valley Station, from where the tram departs, is off the beaten path and has limited cell service – driving a rental car is generally preferable to relying upon taxi or rideshare options.

You may have heard of the beautiful Joshua Tree National Park, another exciting place to visit and less than a one-hour drive from Downtown Palm Springs. This is an amazing place to drive or hike through, where you can explore a fascinating variety of plants and animals. The park is open 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year. While many people prefer to come during the daytime for the views, stargazing is also a popular activity there during the nighttime.

There is very limited cell phone reception in the park, and cell service should not be relied upon. Free public Wi-Fi can be accessed



There are some beautiful golf courses in Palm Springs.

at some of the visitor centers. It is recommended that you download the official National Park Service app to access the free offline maps ahead of time. To fully experience the wonders of this park, it is advised to plan to spend several hours there.

The Greater Palm Springs area is home to a large variety of festivals. The Palm Springs International Film Festival starts off the year in January with a star-studded gala event featuring nearly 180 screenings in theatres around the region. Arts festivals include the Southwest Arts Festival, Art Palm Springs, and the Indian Wells Art Festival. Perhaps most world-renowned, however, are the two music festivals which take over the Palm Springs area every April: Coachella Valley Music & Arts Festival, which welcomes more than 250,000 music fans annually in April,

followed immediately by Stagecoach, the ultimate hub for the 85,000 country music fans who gather from across the world.

While you can certainly peruse shops by walking through Downtown Palm Springs, as well as Old Town La Quinta, true shopping lovers may also wish to explore the Uptown Design District for one-of-a-kind boutiques, Palm Desert's El Paseo for upscale, luxury retailers, or Desert Hills Premium Outlets for the best deals.

Where to Stay

The hotel sector continues to ride a big wave of expansion between new large-scale resort developments, thoughtfully reimagined midcentury modern classics, and multi-million-dollar renovations—giving visitors more options to choose from when it

comes to where to check-in.

During my time in Palm Springs, I had the great pleasure of staying at The Renaissance Esmeralda Resort & Spa, a beautiful resort in Indian Wells, which is conveniently nestled between the Palm Desert and La Quinta regions, just at the foot of the Santa Rosa Mountains. Adjacent to the Indian Wells Golf Resort, The Renaissance Esmeralda Resort & Spa is located off Highway 111 and is approximately a 30-minute drive to the airport and Downtown Palm Springs.

A few years ago, the resort underwent a multi-million-dollar re-design, which included the creation of new guestrooms and suites, the development of a beautiful new two-story lobby, an olive tree grove, and a new set of menus for their restaurants.

Let me tell you, a stay at this hotel truly does feel luxurious. Wherever you turn, you are treated to stunning views of the blue, typically cloudless sky, the desert mountains and the nearby palm trees. The hotel's large pool area features two swimming pools, one with a fountain and the other with zero-entry and a sandy beach, as well as two hot tubs. There is plenty of seating, but for those hoping for a particularly special day, it is possible to reserve VIP chairs or cabana seating. My travel partner and I enjoyed a lovely day in a cabana. Are you a golfer? The hotel offers packages which include the option to golf at the neighboring Indian Wells Golf Resort. The Renaissance Esmeralda also features a fitness center with state-of-the-art facilities, tennis facilities, an entertainment zone with arcade games, virtual reality, and an escape room, a camp for children, and a fantastic spa.

Dining Out

We started off our dining experiences in the Greater Palm Springs region at our own hotel. First, at The Place Lobby Bar, which offers an extensive and creative cocktail menu, as well as many light bites. Both indoor and outdoor seating are available. The second restaurant that we tried at the Renaissance Esmeralda was Cava, which is on the terrace level with a patio adjacent to the swimming pools. Cava has different menus available for breakfast, lunch, and dinner.

At The Gardens on El Paseo, deemed to be the premier shopping and dining destination in the Southern California Desert region, I highly recommend visiting Pacifica Seafood Restaurant during your trip. Their fine dining menu focuses on their selection of fresh seafood, as well as their hand-crafted cocktails and award-winning wine list. Their list of beverages is hand-delivered by your server on an iPad, which allows you to easily scroll through the extensive list of options.

When you hear the word Arnold Palmer, food is not the first thing that comes to mind. Known as "The King," this professional golfer won 92 national and international championships. Arnold Palmer's Restaurant opened in 2004. The menu features some of Palmer's favorites, including fresh seafood, aged beef, and a variety of comfort foods. The daily specials are also frequently evolving, some of which we enjoyed during our visit.

For more about Palm Springs please go to <https://www.visitgreaterpalmsprings.com>.



Dining outdoors at Pacifica.

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