

# Arizona's Scottsdale

Majestic and  
relaxing destination  
offering 330 days of  
sunshine per year

Wildflowers in Scottsdale and across the Arizona desert have a rich history.



**ALEXANDRA COHEN**

FYi

The sky is cloudless and impossibly blue. There are orange and red desert mountains in the distance, with palm trees and cacti closer by. You have made it to your majestic and relaxing destination. You have arrived in Scottsdale.

Scottsdale is Arizona's premier destination for fine dining, shopping and luxury resorts, and I am fortunate to have just returned from my first visit to the region. Scottsdale has over 240,000 citizens, making it one of the fastest growing cities and housing markets in the United States, and it borders other well-known locations such as Phoenix, Paradise Valley, and Tempe, Arizona.

Worried about the weather? There is no need, with Scottsdale boasting 330 days of sunshine per year and year-round swimming weather.

**Things to do**

Looking to explore the city and its surrounding regions? There are plenty of things to do in the Scottsdale area, starting with Camelback Mountain, which is one of the most prominent outdoor destinations in Arizona. Take one of many scenic hikes in the area, or consider engaging in some rock climbing.

The Phoenix Zoo is another nearby option, with 140 animals spanning 125 acres of land. Creatures available to visit include lions, giraffes, monkeys, iguanas, wolves, bears, and more. Additionally, The Phoenix Zoo has partnered with KultureCity to improve its ability to assist and accommodate guests with sensory processing needs. Sensory bags containing fidget tools, noise-canceling headphones and other resources, are available for checkout at Reception and the Safari Cruiser Station. Weighted lap pads are also available upon request at the Safari Cruiser Station.

In the same vein, you may wish to explore Butterfly Wonderland, which is the largest indoor butterfly sanctuary in America. Butterfly Wonderland has a limited number of wheelchairs available on a first come, first serve basis. Wheelchairs are located at the Guest Services desk. They also offer hearing assistance devices for people with and without hearing aids.

For those who like to shop, there are plenty of neighborhoods and shopping centers to explore. Fashion Square Mall is the largest shopping center in the American Southwest, with over 225 stores and 2,000,000 square feet of retail space. The mall, located approximately 10 minutes from the Scottsdale Plaza Resort & Spa, is anchored by Macy's, Dillard's, Nordstrom, and Neiman Marcus. Wheelchair and scooter rental are available, as well as valet parking. Kierland Commons is another beautiful, upscale outdoor lifestyle center with tons of stores and restaurants available. Finally, consider Old Town Scottsdale not only for dinner, but for boutique shopping, cozy restaurants, art galleries, and wine tastings.



A Squirrel Monkey at The Phoenix Zoo.

**Where to stay**

Scottsdale has over 70 hotels and resorts, offering travellers a plethora of options. I chose the Scottsdale Plaza Resort & Villas, where I was fortunate enough to stay in a beautiful two-story villa. The hotel is incredibly well-located, where you are a 10 to 15-minute drive from all major shopping malls as well as Old Town Scottsdale and the many nearby golf courses. While some of the villas are a longer walk from the hotel lobby due to the large, sprawling property, hotel employees are always happy to drive you across the property on one of their many golf carts, which can be found at the main entrance and appear at your door within minutes of your request.

Our villa featured a private entrance as well as an upstairs bedroom with two queen-sized beds, and a main floor which included a living room, dining room, and kitchenette.

One thing that I was looking forward to about my visit was the opportunity to lounge at the pool and enjoy the lovely weather. The Scottsdale Plaza offers visitors a total of five temperature-controlled pools to choose from. My travelling partner and I spent the majority of our time at the main pool, which also features a large, spa-sized hot tub, as well as fantastic food and drink service.

For an elevated pool experience, you can rent one of the hotel's private shaded cabanas, which come equipped with sofa seating, two reserved lounge chairs, as well as an umbrella. The cabana also comes with a mini fridge which contains water bottles and snacks, a dedicated server, chilled towels infused with aromatherapy oil, as well as a complimentary round of select canned seltzers or beers.

For those who are a little bit more athletically inclined, the property also offers tennis courts, which I often saw guests using to play both tennis and pickle ball. The court neighbours the property's 24-hour state-of-the-art fitness center, though given the beautiful weather, some may prefer to exercise outdoors by going for a walk or run across the 40-acre property. Naturally, there are also many nearby trails for those looking to hike.

Moving back in the direction of relaxation, I had the opportunity during my stay to visit the Scottsdale Plaza's Salon & Spa, located directly next to the main pool. While the spa offers a large menu of options, I chose the 50-minute Shea Butter Melt Massage, which I would absolutely do again on my next visit.

For any dining needs while on-site, the property has a market for grab-and-go and two restaurants.

Info: [www.scottsdaleplaza.com](http://www.scottsdaleplaza.com).

**Dining tips**

My first meal of the trip was at The Lincoln Steakhouse & Bar, which is located at the JW Marriott Scottsdale Camelback Inn Resort & Spa. Consider some of the chef's favourite starters,

which includes the incredibly fresh and light-tasting Hamachi crudo, served with white soy, orange blossom vinegar, pickled grapes, and serrano peppers. There is the creatively plated lobster escargot, the restaurant's signature prime 14 ounce rib steak and for dessert the JW cheesecake with raspberry sauce and the Lincoln Rocher, a rich and incredibly tasty chocolate cake.

Tucked away in a quiet corner of Old Town Scottsdale, you will find The House Brasserie, where we enjoyed an excellent meal under the stars. Built in 1939 and nestled in one of Scottsdale's more historic blocks, The House Brasserie is indeed one of the region's oldest standing residences. Aside from having constructed an add-on to their kitchen a decade ago, the building's exterior is still in its original form. Whether you choose to eat inside the comfortable and air-conditioned dining room or outdoors in the large patio, which truly feels like the well-decorated back yard of somebody's home, you will undoubtedly feel at ease dining at this establishment. We recommend the amouse bouche (puff pastry topped with parmesan cheese), flavorful rose summer sangria, whipped feta, the escargots de Bourgogne, the Hudson Valley foie gras, the branzino with celery root velouté, sautéed spinach, roasted corn, oregano vert, and pickled radishes, the filet mignon and finally the housemaid beignets made with smoked cinnamon, sugar, and a salted caramel foam for dipping.

Seeking an authentic Italian fine dining experience during your trip? In the heart of Old Town Scottsdale, you will find Marcellino Ristorante, helmed by Chef Marcellino Verzino and his wife Sima who performs live music alongside her All-Star Trio. We experienced the tasting menu: a starter of bruschetta and cheese, followed by scallops al pesto, two pasta dishes (we chose the gnocchi sorrentina served with tomato sauce and melted mozzarella and the spinach and ricotta ravioli topped with a butter and fresh sage sauce); branzino; and dessert. The restaurant's wine menu and reserve lists feature over 100 selections in addition to an exclusive "Secret Cellar" menu.

Canada is traditionally Scottsdale's top international market, and after years of delay, the city has engaged in a "Loonie Love campaign" to drive a return in Canadian visitation from top markets of Calgary, Toronto, Edmonton and Vancouver specifically. We can certainly encourage them to add Montreal to that list. ■



The exterior of a two storey villa.  
SCOTTSDALE PLAZA RESORT & VILLAS PHOTO



The patio at the Lincoln Steakhouse.  
JW MARRIOTT SCOTTSDALE CAMELBACK INN RESORT & SPA