



Discovering Scottsdale, Arizona

by Alexandra Cohen

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.

Looking to explore the city and its surround-

ing 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. In the same vein, you may wish to explore Butterfly Wonderland, which is the largest indoor butterfly sanctuary in America. 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. Finally, consider Old Town Scottsdale not only for dinner, but for boutique shopping,

cozy restaurants, art galleries, and wine tastings.

As for dining The Lincoln Steakhouse & Bar, located at the JW Marriott Scottsdale Camelback Inn Resort & Spa, serves up locally sourced American cuisine, shareable plates, and craft cocktails. For dinner you must have one the restaurant's signature prime steaks, a 14 oz ribeye which was truly cooked to perfection.

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. Consider the branzino, which is the perfect light dish for all the fish lovers out there and the Chilean sea bass.

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. During our meal, we were treated to a tasting menu, which featured a starter of bruschetta and cheese, followed by scallops al pesto, a primi course, featuring pasta, followed by a secondi course, which features seafood or meat. Before visitors make the difficult choice of which pasta dish to sample, amidst the restaurant's many options, their server brings them a large plate which demonstrates the many special pastas available, including tortelloni stuffed with pureed filet mignon, and handcrafted porcini-infused fettucine with chunks of fresh lobster, sauteed with shiitake mushrooms and truffle oil. For our secondi, we were served one of the restaurant's specials, the branzino dish, which was topped with white wine and butter sauce and was served alongside an incredibly fluffy dollop of mashed potato as well as lemon, capers, grilled carrot, and zucchini. Finally, for dessert, we tasted the restaurant's walnut biscotti and cream, as well as the panna cotta. The restaurant's wine menu and reserve lists feature over 100 selections in addition to an exclusive "Secret Cellar" menu. ■

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