



DARK SKIES

ARIZONA'S DARK SKY DESTINATIONS

Over 23 Arizona communities have earned Dark Sky status from DarkSky International, meaning city lights stay low, so the stars take center stage. It's no coincidence Arizona also boasts one of the highest concentrations of Dark Sky Parks in the country, including Grand Canyon National Park, where the night sky is just as jaw-dropping as the view by day. Add in clear skies, higher elevations, and a long-standing role in space discovery, and you've got more than a stargazing destination; you've got a front-row seat to the universe.

Don't miss a glimmer: **The Starstruck: Arizona Dark Sky Expedition Pass** is your digital guide to the best sky shows in the galaxy. Show your pass to redeem special offers from participating Dark Sky locations! visitarizona.com/experiences-passes

TIP: Combine this itinerary with either the **Tucson and Southern Arizona** itinerary, or the **Northern Arizona** itinerary.

What to do (Tucson & Southern Arizona)

Just outside Tucson, **Oracle State Park** feels like a secret the night sky is in on. Designated an International Dark Sky Park in 2014, it's wrapped by the Santa Catalina Mountains, which politely block out the city glow and let the stars do their thing. We're talking full, unobstructed Milky Way views that stop you mid-sentence.

visitarizona.com/like-a-local/7-places-to-enjoy-arizonas-dark-skies

Want to explore the mysteries of the cosmos? Book a night with **Mt. Lemmon SkyCenter's SkyNights** program: a mountaintop sunset, a light dinner, and an engaging astronomy presentation led by knowledgeable science communicators who make the universe feel a whole lot closer. Then, once the sky flips to black...step up to some of the largest public telescopes in the Southwest for front-row access. Galaxies, nebulae, and planets all become very, very real.

skycenter.arizona.edu/plan-your-visit/programs/skynights

Want to stargaze like a local? Download the **Astro Trail Map** for an out-of-this-world tour of the heavens, Tucson-style. Check in at parks, observatories, science centers, and even underground labs to earn astronomy bragging points and prizes.

visittucson.org/plan-your-visit/maps-and-guides/astro-trail

Where to stay

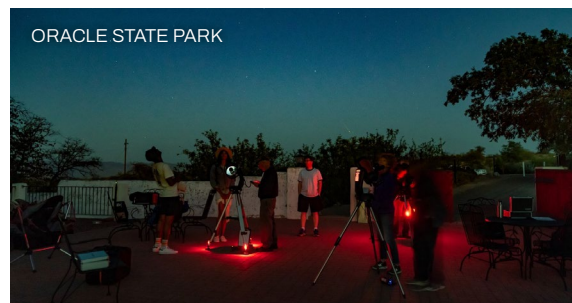
Tucked into Midtown Tucson, **Lodge on the Desert** brings a little hacienda magic to your stay: think adobe-style casitas, a serene cactus garden, and fountains that slow everything down. After an evening spent stargazing, unwind in the heated pool, then head to Cielo's for patio dining, live music, and a margarita that absolutely understands the assignment. lodgeonthedesert.com

Escape to huge skies and that country life at **White Stallion Ranch**. The family-operated dude ranch is just a short drive northwest of Tucson and has been hosting guests (and movie crews!) since the 1940s. Ride, shoot, hike, climb, rodeo, relax...just don't forget to look up. whitestallion.com

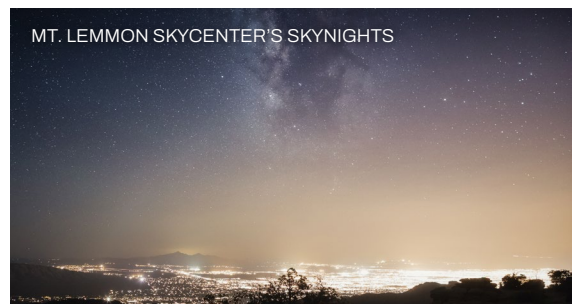
Where to dine

Formerly Tucson's first private school for girls, **The Grill at Hacienda del Sol** now schools you in upscale dining...with a view and a wine list that doesn't mess around (900+ labels). Expect fresh, locally inspired dishes, a patio made for lingering, and just enough romance to make it feel like an occasion...even if it's not. Pro tip: don't skip brunch. haciendadel.sol.com/dining/the-grill-menu

ORACLE STATE PARK



MT. LEMMON SKYCENTER'S SKYNIGHTS



LODGE ON THE DESERT



THE GRILL AT HACIENDA DEL SOL



What to do (Flagstaff & the Grand Canyon)

Perched atop Mars Hill in Flagstaff, **Lowell Observatory** is where the universe feels a little closer to home, and where Pluto was discovered. At 7,200 feet under Flagstaff's famously dark skies (the world's first International Dark Sky City), it's prime stargazing territory. But it's not just about looking up: Lowell brings the cosmos to life with telescope viewing, solar sessions, interactive exhibits, and science talks that make everything click. It's equal parts history, discovery, and pure, starry-eyed wonder. lowell.edu

By day, **Grand Canyon National Park** is all sweeping views and jaw-dropping scale. By night? It quietly steals the show. Far from city lights, and thanks to years of thoughtful dark-sky preservation, you'll find yourself under a sky packed with thousands of stars. And yes, a fully visible Milky Way stretching overhead. It's the kind of view most people simply don't get at home anymore.

The best part? You don't need to go far to experience it. Pull over at viewpoints like **Moran Point** or **Lipan Point**, linger at **Mather Point** after the crowds thin, or head out to **Desert View Watchtower** for a front-row seat to the cosmos. On select nights, ranger-led programs, from constellation talks to moonlit rim walks, bring the sky even closer. visitarizona.com/like-a-local/grand-canyon-after-dark

True astrophiles should plan their trips around the National Park Service's annual **Grand Canyon Star Party** in June. The week-long dark-sky fest is a stargazer's dream. Learn from expert astronomers then hang every night at the telescope lot for constellation chats. grandcanyon.org/experience-grand-canyon/events/grand-canyon-star-party

Where to stay

Highland Grand Canyon: Boutique glamping, with zero roughing it required. Just four miles from the South Rim, hidden in Kaibab National Forest, this off-grid hideaway trades noise for nature. Days are for canyon exploring, nights are for searching the sky (there's a private covered porch with telescope for stargazing), and wondering why you don't live like this all the time. highlandgrandcanyon.com

Right in the heart of downtown Flagstaff, **Hotel Monte Vista** has been welcoming travelers since the Roaring '20s...and it hasn't lost an ounce of character. Soak in the ambiance of one of Flagstaff's oldest hotels, then step outside to a front-row seat on historic Route 66. It's storied, a little spooky, and exactly the kind of place that makes your stay feel like part of the adventure. hotelmontevista.com

Just minutes from Grand Canyon National Park, **The Grand Hotel** is the area's only AAA Three Diamond hotel, serving up rustic chalet charm with all the right comforts. Think cozy lodge vibes, an indoor pool, and a hearty meal (and drink) waiting for you at the Canyon Star Steakhouse & Saloon. It's the perfect place to recharge after a night under those unforgettable stars. grandcanyongrandhotel.com

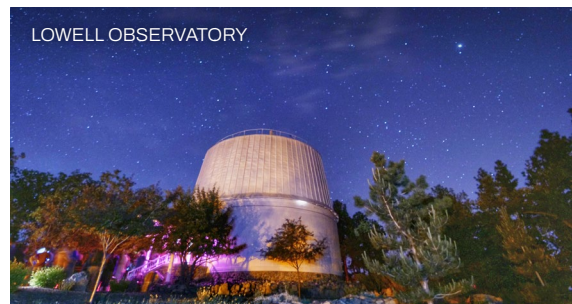
Where to dine

Dial in your celestial vibes with a pre-dark-sky spread at **Atria** in downtown Flagstaff. Award-winning chef Rochelle Daniel is an Arizona-born star in her own right and plates dazzling, "hyper-seasonal" fare for fine-diners. atriarestaurant.com

Dark Sky Brewing: Come for the beer, stay for the atmosphere...cosmic and otherwise. Brewing in the world's first International Dark Sky City, this Flagstaff favorite pairs unique and creative craft pours with its neighbor...wood-fired Neapolitan pizza from Pizzicletta. Grab a seat, order something stellar, and settle in. Around here, the libation lineup is as good as the night sky. darkskybrewing.com

Perched on the South Rim of Grand Canyon, the dining room at **El Tovar** serves up classic elegance with a side of jaw-dropping views. Inside, it's all timber, stone, and historic charm; outside, well...that canyon. The menu leans into Arizona flavors (salmon tostadas and roasted quail), while the lounge and porch invite you to linger, preferably with a drink in hand. visitarizona.com/like-a-local/dining-with-a-view

LOWELL OBSERVATORY



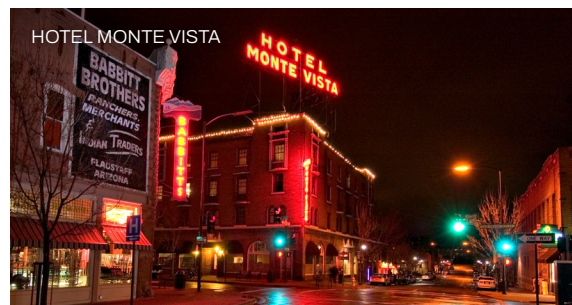
DESERT VIEW WATCHTOWER



HIGHLAND GRAND CANYON



HOTEL MONTE VISTA



EL TOVAR

