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Arizona Dreaming: The State's Sweet (and Suite) Spots to Sleep

Wigwam courts, haunted hotels, romantic B&Bs, fabulous resorts...Arizona's got a bed to suit every head, whether solo or accompanied by family and friends.

When Size Counts: Resorts and Destination Spas

Resorts: Because open space and warm weather abound in southern Arizona, this region has become known as one of the finest resort destinations in the world. In the last decade, many vast new pleasure palaces decked out with golf courses, spas, tennis courts, and pools have sprung up in Greater Phoenix (Four Seasons Scottsdale at Troon North, Westin Kierland Resort & Spa, Sheraton Wild Horse Pass Resort & Spa, to name just a few) and Tucson (JW Marriott Starr Pass), while older ones have been refreshed, expanded (Camelback Inn – A JW Marriott Resort & Spa, Fairmont Scottsdale Princess, Hyatt Regency Scottsdale Resort & Spa at Gainey Ranch, and the Wigwam Golf Resort & Spa all added state-of-the-art spas)....even renamed (Scottsdale's John Gardner Tennis Ranch is now Sanctuary on Camelback Mountain). Most resorts have activities to occupy all ages; a number offer educational and entertaining children's programs to keep the young ones occupied.

Destination Spas: These healthful retreats are designed to cater to guests' body and soul, with classes, treatments, consultations, and challenge activities. Arizona boasts three world-class destination spas, the original Canyon Ranch and Miraval – Life in Balance in Tucson, and Mii Amo in Sedona, all multiple-award winners, all in knockout settings.

A Little Intimacy and Lots of History: From B&Bs to Boutique Resorts

Boutique Resorts: Many Arizona lodgings are smaller than full-blown resorts, but more spread out and facility-rich than standard hotels. The Hermosa Inn, Royal Palms Resort & Spa, and Hotel Theodore in Greater Phoenix, the Arizona Inn, Lodge on the Desert, and Hacienda del Sol in Tucson all fall into this category, and all pack personality galore into their intimate quarters.

Hotels, Lodges, and Inns. A few links in high-end chains such as the Ritz-Carlton and downtown Hyatt Regency in Phoenix aside, Arizona has few high-rise hotels. But in the past, many lodgings in southern Arizona were built in citified East Coast styles, while many in the

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north were designed to suite their rustic, cooler locales. As a result, the state's historic lodgings come in all sizes, shapes, price ranges, with some even claiming ghost residencies.

Among the most interesting, from north to south, are the Thunderbird Lodge at the Canyon de Chelly, featuring a dining room that used to be a trading post; the immense limestone-and-log Grand Canyon Lodge at the North Rim; Gouldings Lodge in Monument Valley, long a favorite of filmmakers, including John Ford; El Tovar at the Grand Canyon's South Rim, spiffed up for its 100th birthday in 2005; Winslow's La Posada, created by architect Mary Colter for the Fred Harvey Company; the Hassayampa Inn in Prescott, Arizona's first to have a covered driveway for autos; the San Carlos in downtown Phoenix, featuring air-conditioning and an elevator before any other hotel in the Southwest; Tucson's Hotel Congress, where members of John Dillinger's gang holed up; Bisbee's Copper Queen, a grand holdover from Arizona's mining heyday, and the marble-staired Gadsden in Douglas, believed by some to be the most haunted hotel in the state.

Bed and breakfasts. You can find Victorian-style B&Bs in Arizona (the Royal Elizabeth in Tucson) but most B&Bs have more local character: for example, a former bordello in Williams (the Red Garter), a one-time Spanish land grant where John Wayne stayed (Hacienda Corona de Guevavi in Nogales), and an inn created to accommodate birdwatchers (Casa de San Pedro near Sierra Vista). The greatest concentrations of B&Bs are in Tucson, southeast Arizona, and around Flagstaff, Prescott, and Sedona (where they tend to resemble small luxury inns).

How the West was Slept: Guest Ranches

In the early 20th century, when raising cattle became less profitable than it had been in the past, some ranchers started renting out rooms to Easterners, who wanted to horse around in the fresh air. Dude ranching is no longer in its heyday, but plenty of these accommodations remain in the state, primarily around Tucson, southeast Arizona, and Wickenburg. Some guest ranches have been spiffed up, offering golf courses, conference centers, and in-room amenities like phones; several run special events like all-women getaways. But all still involve horses, hearty meals, and family fun.

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Boats, Trains, Tipis, and More

Some of Arizona's most interesting accommodations defy easy categorization.

- At Coyote Pass Hospitality near Canyon de Chelly, guests sleep in a hogan, a six-sided traditional Navajo home.
- Shady Dell in Bisbee rents retro-fitted 1940s and 1950s trailers – plus a moored yacht.
- The Wigwam Hotel in Holbrook, a Route 66 motor court, offers individual tipis fronted by classic cars; the Cochise Stronghold Bed & Breakfast in southeast Arizona also provides one tipi sleepover.
- Railroad buffs can bed down in a converted railroad caboose at the Canyon Motel in Williams and at Karrels Double K Ranch B&B in Tucson.
- Don't care about dry land? Houseboats, many of them luxurious, are available on Lake Powell, Lake Havasu, Lake Mead and Lake Mohave.

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