

# Arizona Is for Snow birds

Tortilla Flat.



Salt River Fields  
in Scottsdale.



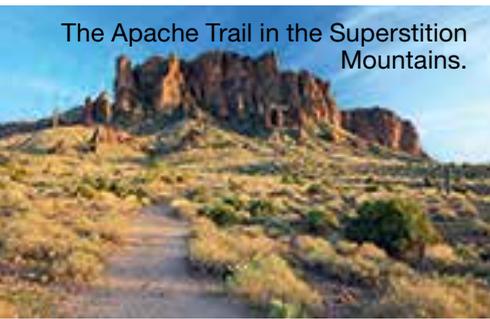
Tubac  
shop.



So *this* is where everyone  
gets to in the winter

By Wendy & Rob Lindsay

The city of Sedona.



family-owned-and-operated farm hosts tours, olive oil samplings, cooking classes, and olive festivals during the winter months. Nearby, the Farm at Agritopia holds a farmers' market every Wednesday showcasing its organically grown produce. The coffee shop there and Joe's Farm Grill are also popular spots to meet friends. For something a little different, in downtown Gilbert's historic Heritage District, let the knowledgeable wait staff recommend a pairing of brochettes and wine at Postino Wine Cafe. Postino's terrace has a unique outdoor misting system that creates a light drifting coolness on very hot days.

For a day trip out of Mesa, we recommend a drive along the historic Apache Trail into the beautiful Superstition Mountains. It's an area steeped in the

Photos: Thinkstock/Bubaone (map); Dreamstime/Timroberts/airtel (stadium) and Oleksandr Buzko (mountains);



legends of the Old West. Near the beginning of the trail is the Superstition Mountain Museum, a five-hectare (12.5-acre) site featuring a variety of exhibits and reproductions of 19th-century buildings, including a Wells Fargo office and a stagecoach stop. Most of the buildings have been used as sets for movies and TV series. The Old Livery Barn has a wall of autographed photos from movie stars who filmed there. Some of the period-costumed volunteer staff are rather entertaining characters, too.

As the road winds and climbs into the mountains, the scenery takes on a rugged beauty, with giant saguaro cacti, nature-sculpted rocks, canyons, and a great expanse of desert. You almost expect to spy a cowboy in the distance. Apparently this historic road follows the old stagecoach and freight wagon route from Mesa east to the mining camp at Globe (now a city). A great place for lunch is the old stagecoach stop of Tortilla Flat, where you can munch a burger sitting astride a saddle at the Saloon bar. A few miles past Tortilla Flat, the road turns to very rough grav-

Photos: iStock/Dave16957 (Phoenix); Lindsay Editorial (Tortilla Flat);

el—not recommended for rental vehicles. On the way back to Mesa, our last stop was the Dolly Steamboat Tour on Canyon Lake. It offered a relaxing break from driving, and the scenery was dramatic as the lake twisted through can-

yons. Boat staff circulated with binoculars to help spot mountain sheep and eagles along the shore. (Reservations are recommended during the winter, when cruises are often sold out.) As you return to town, don't forget to look back at the

Like many other Canadians, we had come to the warmth and sunshine of Arizona to thaw winter's cold from our bones. The Arizona heartland is a natural for snowbirds, boasting over 300 days of sunshine a year, and the balmy winter temps rarely go below 16°C (60°F).

An Arizona winter offers a cornucopia of health benefits, too. Since it provides a dry heat, those with arthritis suffer less. Those with pollen allergies may enjoy medication-free days. The area is referred to in ads as "big-sky country," and the vast blue, blue skies have a psychological effect, uplifting your spirits. There is also so much to see and do that the winter months will melt away before you know it.

In March, spring training draws thousands of baseball fans to Arizona, so make reservations well in advance. The 15 teams in Florida's Grapefruit League are scattered around the state. However, the Arizona Cactus League's

15 teams are all based around the greater Scottsdale-Phoenix-Mesa area. Fans can readily take in many games within a relatively short drive from their accommodations (see box, below right, for teams and locations).

Our first stop was Mesa, the state's third-largest city, located about 32 kilometres (20 miles) east of Phoenix, the capital and largest city (Tucson is the second-largest city). We checked into the Hyatt Place Phoenix/Mesa because of its proximity to the Cubs' new spring training facility (dubbed Wrigleyville West). The Mesa Riverview Shopping Center was handily next door. At the end of the day, it was a novelty to float in the hotel pool and watch another ball game on the giant poolside 80-inch HDTV.

**The Apache Trail**  
Lunch and dinner in Mesa can be a new culinary experience every day. East of Mesa is Queen Creek Olive Mill, where a visit is like a mini-taste-trip to Italy. The

TEAM	CITY
Arizona Diamondbacks	Scottsdale
Chicago Cubs	Mesa
Chicago White Sox	Glendale
Cincinnati Reds	Goodyear
Cleveland Indians	Goodyear
Colorado Rockies	Scottsdale
Kansas City Royals	Surprise
Los Angeles Angels	Tempe
Los Angeles Dodgers	Glendale
Milwaukee Brewers	Phoenix
Oakland Athletics	Phoenix
San Diego Padres	Peoria
San Francisco Giants	Scottsdale
Seattle Mariners	Peoria
Texas Rangers	Surprise