

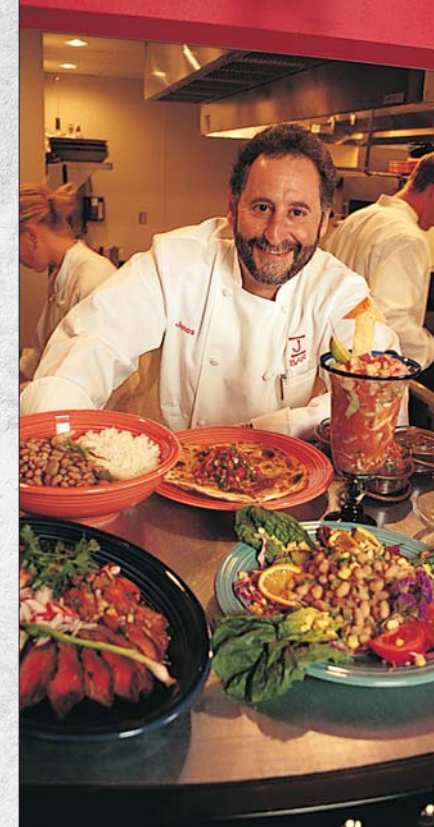
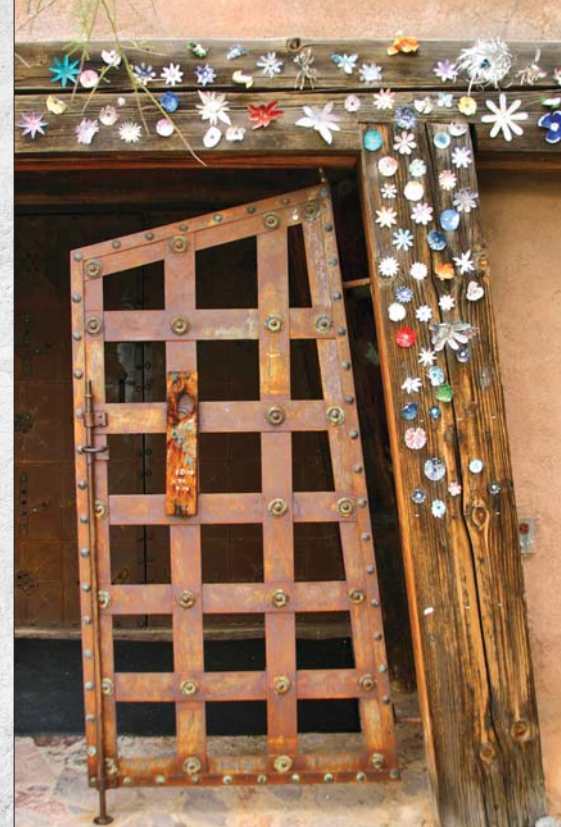
Tucson one- of-a- kind

How well do you really know Tucson? Perhaps you last saw it when you graduated from the University of Arizona, while in for a quick meeting, or buzzing down I-10 on your way east. It's time to get to know this amazing city. The perfect weekend or weeklong getaway is closer than you think; with no flying required. Just two hours' drive south of the metro Phoenix area, a new adventure awaits. Visit "that city" down south. Whether it's a first or fiftieth visit, Tucson will surprise you when you open your senses and take in what the Old Pueblo has to offer.

Most people know Tucson offers highly rated resorts, challenging desert golf, amazing spas and stunning scenery. What may surprise you is the seemingly never-ending list of unique things to do once you've finished lying poolside or sinking a putt.

Escape the mid-day sun by exploring Tucson's one-of-a-kind galleries, museums and unique arts attractions. For instance, tucked in the foothills of the Santa Catalina Mountains north of Tucson, the DeGrazia Gallery in the Sun is a hidden treasure. This 10-acre retreat built by artist Ted DeGrazia includes a gallery of his thousands of works of art, an open-air mission, and his home – all built by the artist's own hands, with the help of his Native American friends. DeGrazia is beloved and well known for his impressionistic paintings of Native Americans. His images have become iconic of Southwestern life. A fascinating walk through the artist's studio and home will open your eyes to his influences and processes, while a visit to the gallery offers a perfect opportunity to be surrounded with functional and decorative pieces created from a true passion for the Southwest. For those seeking a more contemporary collection, Ansel Adams' Center for Creative Photography at the University of Arizona appeals to the shutterbug in any casual observer. Today the Center houses the works of more than 50 renowned 20th century artists, including Adams, Edward Weston, Richard Avedon and Lola Alvarez Bravo, to name a few. The Polaroid Library at the Center contains one of the world's most comprehensive collections of photographic materials and more than 26,000 volumes on the history of photography.

The contemplation of art (or the art of



contemplation; whichever you've experienced at Tucson's galleries) will surely do one thing—make you hungry. Tucson has developed a reputation for fabulous Mexican and Southwestern cuisine. In a time when big-box stores and chain restaurants take over the food scene in some towns, Tucson will surprise you with hundreds of original dining options. Taking full advantage of native ingredients like cactus paddles and saguaro blossoms, some of the finest chefs in the world create new dishes with old flavors that thrill locals and visitors alike. For a unique dining experience, enjoy "New Southwestern Cuisine" from one of its creators, Chef Janos Wilder, at Janos. Or treat yourself to the elegance of Contemporary Continental Cuisine at the Five-Diamond Ventana Room. Food from the Far East can indeed be found out West. Tucson boasts an array of Japanese, Chinese, Thai and Indian specialties. For a taste fusion of all these ancient cultures, try the Malaysian cuisine served up at Neo and Seri Melaka. This pair of restaurants offers exotic entrees prepared with ingredients from the markets in Southeastern Asia, India and China. The authentic taste of Sonora, Mexico, can be found by venturing to South Tucson for a world-famous Sonoran Hot dog, or some carne asada tacos. Hop aboard Gray Line Tours' "Best of the Barrio" tour, which offers an opportunity to sample the cuisine of South Tucson's

historic Barrio neighborhood in an air-conditioned bus. To help your choice of dining options, visit www.visitTucson.org/culinary to find what you crave.

Wine lovers may be surprised to discover that just a short drive south of downtown Tucson, the beautiful rolling grasslands of Southern Arizona are ripe with vineyards sure to leave no palate unpleased. It's hard to say which is more wonderful, the drive down, or the tasting experience! Enthusiasts and casual wine drinkers alike will find a wine to their liking, guaranteed. Some say the climate and soil conditions in the Southern Arizona communities of Sonoita and Elgin are similar to those in Burgundy, France, which creates a perfect environment for fabulous wine creations. Why not see for yourself on a day trip to Arizona's wine country? Check out vineyard and other day trip options at www.visitTucson.org/daytrips.

From off-the-beaten-path exhibits to unexpected culinary adventures, once you decide to open your mind and really explore, Tucson will surprise you. You don't have to seek out new discoveries on your own. Help is available at the Tucson Visitors Center at 100 S. Church Avenue, or by consulting the Metropolitan Tucson Convention & Visitors Bureau's information specialists at 800-638-8350. Visit us online at www.visitTucson.org. ■

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