



Guest Commentator PBL, Tucson AZ: When I retired, we left the cold, clammy Northeast and headed straight out I-40 west 2,500 miles to desert dry Tucson, Arizona. We've enjoyed two sunny retirement decades in the Sunshine State, and experienced many of its senior-friendly destinations. Here's our list of favorites.

Grand Canyon: www.nps.gov/grca Spend quality time at this breathtaking creation by Mother Nature. On our visits, we went to the South Rim. It's a five-hour drive from Tucson, with a halfway lunch stop in the beautiful town of Flagstaff, set in towering pine forests.

Our favorite Grand Canyon activity is the one-mile mule ride down to the desert floor and banks of the Colorado River from Bright Angel Lodge. The trip can be difficult for the very elderly and physically-challenged. I'd advise a one-hour ride (\$50) for first timers. Reservations for the very popular trip must be made at least six months in advance. www.nps.gov/grca/planyourvisit/mule_trips

Tombstone: www.tombstoneweb.com This Old West town is an hour's drive from Tucson. It's mostly for tourists, and fun to see the reenactment of the gunfight at the O.K. Corral. Visit the infamous Boot Hill cemetery, with wooden markers and descriptions of how the late cowboys met their fate.

Monument Valley: www.arizonaguide.com Places to Visit › Arizona Parks & Monuments) For Western movie buffs, this was director John Ford's favorite backdrop for those great John Wayne movies. On our trips through the stunning landscape, we rode Jeeps driven by Navajo guides.

Monument Valley is a six-hour drive north from Tucson. To break up the long trip, we'd start at dawn, stop for breakfast in Phoenix, lunch in Flagstaff, and arrive at Monument Valley in time to watch the sun set over the brilliantly rocky landscape.

Phoenix-Scottsdale: phoenix.gov An hour and a half north of Tucson is the state capital, with its posh suburb of Scottsdale. This major Arizona population center is a combination of contemporary cityscape, surrounding mountains, Sonoran Desert, upscale resorts and

traditional Southwest hospitality.

Pima Air & Space Museum pimaair.org This facility was a half-hour drive from our Tucson home, adjacent to the city airport and Davis-Monthan Air Force Base. The museum hangar is surrounded by 150 desert acres displaying hundreds of vintage aircraft. Included are retired Air Force, Marine, Army and Navy aircraft dating back to World War II.

I had a special interest in the facility, because my Air Force service in the Vietnam War. We visited the museum many times, and I enjoyed the nostalgia of seeing many familiar classic military aircraft.