

A Weekend Guide To Spring Training In Scottsdale

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If you're headed south for a weekend to watch your Major League Baseball team gear up for opening day, you'll want to make the most of a short spring training trip. Last week we posted on how to navigate Florida's Grapefruit League, and today we have an expert guide to baseball's pre-season scene in [Scottsdale](#), Ariz.

Half of MLB's 30 teams—known as the Cactus League—train in the luxury enclave of [Scottsdale](#) just outside of Phoenix. The stadiums are located close to each other and there are a slew of places to eat, play and stay in this dynamic desert town.

Where to stay

For both serenity and proximity, book a room at [The Phoenician](#), where hiking mecca Camelback Mountain is in your backyard. The [Forbes Travel Guide](#) Four-Star resort has a special deal for those in town for spring training: The Diamond Package includes shuttle service to Old Town Scottsdale, where you'll find Scottsdale Stadium (the [San Francisco](#) Giants play here), a special spring training welcome amenity, a round of golf and an on-the-house appetizer at Relish Burger Bistro. Make it a family affair with the Rookie Package, geared toward the younger set with amenities like movie passes.

New, hip and refreshingly different, The Saguaro boutique hotel adds a much-needed splash of vibrant color (literally and figuratively) to Old Town Scottsdale. The Joie de Vivre hotel is decked out in 12 bright hues (all of which can be found in native desert wildflowers) and has two pools—one for quiet relaxation, the other for daytime pool parties. Within walking distance of Scottsdale Stadium and a short drive from Salt River Fields (the ballpark of both the Arizona Diamondbacks and Colorado Rockies), The Saguaro sits in a key location for those who want to live and breathe baseball. Its spring training package includes a baseball game survival kit with Cracker Jack, sunscreen and—our favorite—Big League Chew.

Where to see the games

Located in the heart of the city, Scottsdale Stadium hosts the Giants come springtime. One of our favorite features is the VIP experience in Charro Lodge—tickets include food, drinks and prime seats (they're shaded—offering an escape from the hot Southwest sun). If you want something more casual, opt for the lawn seats and get a picnic-like experience. Even with 11,500 seats, tickets at Scottsdale Stadium can be tough to snag the day of a game, so book in advance.

Less than 10 miles away is the spring training facility of the Arizona Diamondbacks and Colorado Rockies. The 13,000-seat Salt River Fields at Talking Stick is the newest addition to the Cactus League and a nice one at that—food and drink options include tacos and margaritas, there's ample lawn seating, three party decks and views of the nearby mountains. A slew of other ballparks dot the area, too. Hohokam Stadium is 20 minutes outside of Scottsdale in Mesa, and is home to the [Chicago](#) Cubs (who continually draw the most fans in the Cactus League year after year). Surprise Recreation Campus (about 50 minutes from Scottsdale) doubles as the spring training field for both the Kansas City Royals and the Texas Rangers.

<http://www.forbes.com/sites/forbestravelguide/2012/03/12/a-weekend-guide-to-spring-training-in-scottsdale/>

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Where to eat

Jose Garces' new restaurant Distrito (within The Saguaro) churns out authentic Mexican street food, from shrimp ceviche to mouth-watering tortas. The vibe is modern and fun with an emphasis on traditional plates from Mexico City. And because it's open for breakfast, lunch and dinner, we suggest at least one pit stop. Come here late night for quick eats and to sample a tequila flight (Distrito has more than 100 varieties).



Distrito. Photo courtesy of Tim Street-Porter.

Head to Paradise Valley, a 10-minute drive from Scottsdale, for a fine-dining experience at Elements, the Sanctuary at Camelback Mountain's cutting edge restaurant. The kitchen is led by chef Beau MacMillan, an *Iron Chef America* winner, and serves seasonal American cuisine with a bit of Asian flair. The resort's signature restaurant serves breakfast, lunch, dinner and even late-night snacks, so you'll find innovative dishes such as vanilla pecan waffles or shrimp and pork dumplings throughout the entire day.

Where to play

At night, retreat to the bars inside the W Scottsdale. Soak up warm evenings on the patio at Shade Lounge & Bar or listen to live music in the Living Room on Saturday nights. Shade is more upscale and has a dress code (men must wear pants, collared shirts and close-toed shoes), but the innovative cocktails are worth the dress-up effort.

For the low key, a drink or two at Rusty Spur Saloon in Old Town is an excellent way to cap a day at the ballpark. Walk through the swinging door entrance (cowboy style), order a cold beer and take in the Old West décor and a casual attitude.